Islaamic Etiquettes

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Introduction

There is no doubt in the fact that Islaam is a pure religion that encompasses many etiquettes. These include many beneficial etiquettes that are pertinent to people of all walks of life, be they old or young, male or female which are not found in another religion.

Islaam therefore encourages us to adopt these etiquettes and to bring them completely into our lives so that our personalities develop into that of a complete and perfect Mu'min. These etiquettes adorn a person's character, makes him a lovable person and creates unity between Muslims. It is as if these etiquettes are the objective and core of the Shari'ah.

This booklet titled 'Islaamic Etiquettes' is therefore being presented so that people may adopt these etiquettes and put them into practise. As far as their benefits are concerned, these etiquettes are a great code of life and each one of them is worthy of being treasured for life. It is because of this that Imaam Kirmaani رحمه الله states in his book *Farooq* that the status of etiquette is greater than that of the actual deeds. This holds true because when a small deed is done with the proper etiquette, it becomes more valuable than a bigger deed done without the proper etiquette.

A saint once addressed his son saying, "Dear son! Carry out your deeds with the proper etiquette because etiquettes are like the salt in the food. The deed will be as good as the etiquettes are and the salt also needs to be as much as the quantity of the food."

Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan bin Qaasim رحمه الله says that in the twenty years that he spent with Imaam Maalik رحمه الله, eighteen years were spent teaching him etiquettes and the remaining two were used to acquire education. He says,

“If only I could have spent all my student days learning etiquettes!”

Imaam Shaafi’ee رحمه الله says that Imaam Maalik رحمه الله said to him, “O Muhammad! Carry out deeds as you use flour and add knowledge to it as you use salt. A little knowledge in your deeds will add great value to them and by knowledge I mean etiquette.”

Rasulullaah ρ said that when one visits one’s Muslim brother, one must ensure that one’s clothing and conveyance is presentable so that one’s status amongst people is not compromised because Allaah detests foolish deeds and futile acts.[1]

Muslims should therefore be known for their excellent manners, friendly faces, good character and mild temperaments (so that people recognise such people as Muslims).

We pray to Allaah to make the subject matter of the booklet beneficial for one and all and grant us all the inspiration to practise on the words and teachings of Rasulullaah ρ. Aameen.

Muhammad Zubayr Abdul Hameed Zamzi

[1] Abu Dawood, *Kitaabul Libaas*.

The Etiquette of Entering and Leaving the Home

First knock gently at the door when entering your own house or that of another. Never knock loudly. After knocking, stand aside to wait for a reply. If you receive no reply after the first attempt, knock a second time and then a third if necessary. If no reply is received after knocking thrice, leave the house without knocking any more.

When leaving the house, shut the door gently without making a noise and do not leave it open so that it would make a noise when blown shut. Always remember to close the door gently with your hand, keeping your hand on it until it is closed shut because pushing the door shut will make a loud noise that will disturb others. Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها says that Rasulullaah ρ said, **"Do everything with gentleness because when gentleness is removed from something, it leaves it scarred."**[1] This means that any thing devoid of gentleness is bereft of any good because since Allaah is compassionate and merciful towards His creation, He therefore wants people to behave in a like manner towards the creation. A Hadith also informs us that the rewards Allaah bestows for gentleness He does not bestow for anything else.

One should perform two Rakaahs salaah before leaving home and then two Rakaahs when returning. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Perform two Rakaahs salaah before leaving home, for it will protect you from harm after entering. Perform two Rakaahs when returning and it will protect you from all harm after you leave."[2]

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[1] Muslim (Vol.1 Pg.322) and Bukhaari (Vol.2 Pg.890).
[2] *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* (Vol.2 Pg.572), as quoted in *Muntakhab Ahadeeth* pg.255.

The Du'aa for Leaving the House

بِسْمِ اللهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللهِ وَ لا حَوْلَ وَلا قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللَّهِ

TRANSLATION: I leave the house in the name of Allaah and trusting in Him, for there is no power and might but from Allaah."[1]

Thereafter, recite:

اَللَّهُمَّ اِنِّي أَعُوْذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَضِلَّ أَوْ اُضَلَّ أَوْ اَزِلَّ أَوْ اُزَلَّ أَوْ اَظْلَمَ أَوْ اُظْلَمَ عَلَيَّ أَوْ اَجْهَلَ أَوْ اُجْهَلَ اِلَيَّ [2]

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[1] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.215).
[2] Abu Dawood (Pg.695).

The Etiquette of Greeting and Its Virtues

We cannot thank Allaah enough for making us Muslims because Islaam is that one Deen (religion) that holds countless benefits, wisdom and ease in every injunction and etiquette. We should therefore do everything according to the blessed manner in which Rasulullaah ρ did it, whether it pertains to our social relationships, our business dealings and our meetings with each other.

Our beloved Nabi ρ has taught us the manner of doing things for every occasion, such as when meeting someone and when bidding him farewell. The method Rasulullaah ρ has taught us when meeting the family at home is to show love and affection to them and to make Salaam to them.

The Sunan of Abu Dawood reports a Hadith in which the Sahabi Hadhrat Imraan bin Husayn τ says that before accepting Islaam, they greeted each other by saying, " أَنْعَمَ اللهُ بِكَ عَيْناً " ('May Allaah grant you coolness of your eyes') and " أَنْعِمْ صَبَاحاً " ('May you have a good morning'). However, he says, when they were removed from the darkness of ignorance and found the light of Islaam, Rasulullaah ρ forbade them from using these terms and taught them to greet by saying " أَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم " (*As Salaamu Alaykum*).

Even if we think about it today, we will see that there can be no words of greeting that display more love, respect and well-wishing than these. They are words of an extremely concise du'aa that entreat Allaah to grant the person safety from all types of harm. These are words of compassion towards youngsters as well as words of respect towards elders.

The word السّلام (As Salaam) is also amongst the names of Allaah, which is used in the Qur'aan as a term of honour and glad tidings for the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام. Allaah says " سلام على نوح في العالمين" ,"سلام على ابراهيم" ,"سلام على موسى و هارون" ," سلام على الياسين" ,"سلام على المرسلين" ," سلام على عباده الذين اصطفى".

In short, there are no words of greeting better than " ألسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم " (*As Salaamu Alaykum*). When two friends or acquaintances meet, there is no better way to express their mutual happiness, love and close bond between them. If the two are strangers, these words serve to create trust and a bond of friendship between them. By stating these words, each of the two persons is expressing to the other that he is a well-wisher and is desirous of making du'aa for him because of the spiritual bond they share.

Nevertheless, greeting with the words " ألسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم " (*As Salaamu Alaykum*) and replying with the words "وَعَلَيْكُمُ ألسَّلامُ" (*Wa Alaykumus Salaam*) is amongst the blessed teachings of Rasulullaah ρ. Rasulullaah ρ had emphasised it greatly and stated great virtues for adopting it. We must therefore ensure that we greet with the words taught to us by Allaah and His Rasool ρ. The first person to greet must say " ألسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم " (*As Salaamu Alaykum*) and the person replying must say, "وَعَلَيْكُمُ ألسَّلامُ" (*Wa Alaykumus Salaam*). This is the best way to engender mutual love and happiness between Muslims and is a hallmark of Islaam, which Muslim men and women can use.

" ألسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم " (*As Salaamu Alaykum*) is a du'aa asking Allaah to safeguard the next person from all harm and to grant safety to his wealth and life. It is also a du'aa that Allaah safeguards the family and associates of such a person

from the same and that Allaah also safeguards the person's Deen, Imaan and life in this world and Aakhirah. Now if all of this has to be pictured when greeting a fellow Muslim, can there be any better way to express one's love, attachment and feeling of well-wishing?

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that " أَلسَّلام " (*As Salaam)* is from amongst the names of Allaah, which He has sent down to earth. It must therefore be spread about (amongst you).[1]

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "You people cannot enter Jannah unless you are Mu'mineen and you cannot be true Mu'mineen until you love each other. Should I not inform you of an act that will create love between you? Make Salaam a common practice amongst yourselves."[2]

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Make Salaam a common practice amongst yourselves so that you may elevated."[3]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, " أَلسَّلام (*As Salaam)* is from amongst the names of Allaah, which He has sent down to earth. It must therefore be spread because when a Muslim passes by some people and greets them with Salaam and they reply to his greeting, he attains a degree of excellence above them for reminding them. However, if they fail to reply to his greeting, the angels, who are better than people, reply to the greeting."[4]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ also reports from Rasulullaah ρ that from amongst the signs of Qiyaamah is

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[1] *Muntakhab Ahadeeth* pg.522
[2] Muslim (Vol.2 Pg.114).
[3] Tabraani, as quoted in *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* (Vol.8 Pg.65).
[4] *Targheeb wat Tarheeb* (Vol.3 Pg.427).

that a person will greet another only when he knows who he is.[1]

Allaah declares in the Qur'aan: **When you enter any homes, then greet yourselves** *(those Muslims in the house)* **with a prayer** *(with Salaam, which is a prayer)* **that has been ordained by Allaah and which is blessed and pure."[2]**

Rasulullaah ρ said, "Greet those whom you know as well as those whom you do not know."[3] Hadhrat Jaabir τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Greet your family with Salaam when you enter the home because Shaytaan will not enter the house with you as long as you do this."

Therefore, people should make it a habit to greet with Salaam when entering the home if they wish to fill their homes with goodness and blessings.

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "When any of you meets his brother, he should greet him with Salaam and if they happen to be separated by a tree, a wall or a rock, they should again greet with Salaam when they reunite."[4] This Hadith teaches us that even if we are separated for a few seconds after meeting, we should greet with Salaam as soon as we reunite. This Hadith highlights the emphasis that Islaam places on greeting with Salaam.

Greeting with Salaam When Entering and Leaving the Home or a Gathering

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said to him, "Dear son! When you greet with Salaam upon entering

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[1] Ahmad (Vol.1 Pg.406).
[2] Surah Noor, verse 61.
[3] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.419).
[4] Abu Dawood (Vol.2 Pg.351).

your family's home, it will be a source of blessings for you."[1]

Hadhrat Qataadah τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Greet the inhabitants of a home with Salaam when entering and pray for their safety again when leaving (greet again with Salaam)."[2]

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ says that Rasulullaah ρ stated, "When any of you arrives at a gathering, he should greet with Salaam and sit down if it is appropriate to do so. He should then greet with Salaam again when he decides to leave." (The parting Salaam is therefore as important as the first).

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[1] Tirmidhi (Vol.2 Pg.99).
[2] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.421).

Some Rulings Pertaining to Greeting with Salaam

Rasulullaah ρ has also specified some guidelines and rulings with regard to greeting with Salaam. Here follows a few Ahadeeth:

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that the younger person should greet the elder person, the person passing by should greet the one who is sitting and the smaller group should greet the larger group.[1] Another narration states the person riding should greet the one who is walking.[2] The wisdom behind this instruction appears to be the humbling of one who appears to be in a superior position.

Hadhrat Amr bin Al Aas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Dear people! Worship Allaah, feed His bondsmen and spread Salaam amongst you. You will then surely enter Jannah in safety."[3] In this Hadith, Rasulullaah ρ has enjoined three acts, for which he has given the glad tidings of Jannah. The first is to worship Allaah, which is the express purpose for which Allaah had created the creation. The second is to feed people, referring to charitably feeding the poor and needy as well as feeding family, friends and the pious to express love and goodwill. This creates unity and love between people and is also an effective purge against the destructive malady of

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[1] Abu Dawood (Vol.2 Pg.706).
[2] Abu Dawood.
[3] Ibn Maajah (Pg.263).

miserliness. The third is to spread the hallmark of Islaam, being that of greeting each other with the words of" أَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم " (*As Salaamu Alaykum*) and "وَعَلَيْكُمُ أَلسَّلامُ" (*Wa Alaykumus Salaam*). It must be said so commonly that it is on everyone's lips. The end result of practising on all these injunctions is that "You will then surely enter Jannah in safety."

Requesting to Enter without First Greeting with Salaam

When Hadhrat Ataa رحمه الله asked Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ about a person who requests to enter without first greeting with Salaam, Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ replied that he should not be permitted to enter until he greets with Salaam.

Hadhrat Ibn Jurayj رحمه الله reports that he heard Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ say that when a person requests permission to enter without first greeting with Salaam, he should be denied entry until he brings the key to receiving permission (i.e. the Salaam).

The above two Ahadeeth make it clear that a person should not be allowed to enter a place until he greets with Salaam.

Rasulullaah ρ has also stated that there are three persons who are under Allaah's protection as long as they are alive and they will all be admitted into Jannah as soon as they pass away. They are:

1. The one who greets with Salaam when he enters the home

2. The one who leaves for the Masjid to engage in Ibaadah there
3. The one who goes out in the path of Allaah

Who can deny the fact that every Muslim needs Allaah's protection? This is such a simple way to acquire it and so rewarding as well. We must therefore strive to do exactly what Rasulullaah ρ taught us. May Allaah grant us all the ability to do so. Aameen.

Another narration from Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ states that a person must greet with Salaam when he arrives and sits with a gathering and do so again when leaving.[1]

A Hadith from Hadhrat Anas τ states that when two Muslims meet and shake hands, seventy pardons are distributed between them and seventy nine more for meeting with smiling faces. Another Hadith states that the Salaam is completed with the handshake.[2] The handshake should therefore take place after the Salaam has been made.

Seeking Permission to Enter

Rasulullaah ρ directed that one must first greet with Salaam and then also seek permission to enter a home or a gathering when wishing to meet someone there. This is necessary because one never knows whether it is an appropriate time to meet the person.

Hadhrat Kaldah bin Hambal τ reports, "Safwaan bin Umayyah τ once sent me to take some milk, a baby deer and some cucumbers to Rasulullaah ρ. Rasulullaah ρ was at the top of the valley and I went up to him without greeting with Salaam and without seeking permission to

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[1] Abu Dawood (Vol.2 Pg.707) and *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.421).
[2] Tirmidhi (Pg.273).

see him. He therefore told me to go back and to say, 'As Salaamu Alaykum. May I enter?'"[1]

Hadhrat Safwaan bin Umayyah τ had been an enemy of Islaam and was also the son of Islaam's notorious enemy Umayyah bin Khalaf. By the grace of Allaah, Hadhrat Safwaan τ accepted Islaam after Makkah was conquered and it was most probably when Rasulullaah ρ travelled to Makkah that this incident took place. Rasulullaah ρ was camping at the upper reaches of Makkah, called Ma'laa when Hadhrat Safwaan τ sent his uterine brother Hadhrat Kaldah τ with the gifts. He had no idea that one is required to first greet and then seek permission when wishing to meet someone. He therefore went to Rasulullaah ρ without first greeting or seeking permission. Rasulullaah ρ therefore practically taught him what to do so that he may not forget it in future.

Hadhrat Ataa bin Yasaar رحمه الله reports that a man once asked Rasulullaah ρ, "Should I seek permission even to enter a room where my mother is?" "Certainly," Rasulullaah ρ replied. "But I live with her in the same house," the man explained. "You should still seek permission," Rasulullaah ρ repeated. "But I have to see to her needs (and therefore need to see her often)," the man added. Rasulullaah ρ then said, "You must still seek permission. Do you wish to see her naked?" "Not at all," the man replied. "Then ensure that you seek permission first," Rasulullaah ρ emphasised.[2]

This Hadith emphasises that a person must seek permission to enter even his mother's house and room because it should never be that he chances upon her when she is in a state that she would not like him to see her in.

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[1] Tirmidhi (Vol.2 Pg.96) and Abu Dawood (Vol.2 Pg.703).
[2] Maalik pg.725 and *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.401).

Hadhrat Jaabir τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ instructed, "Do not permit a person to enter when he has not first greeted with Salaam."[1]

The Islaamic manner of seeking permission to enter is to first greet with Salaam and to then ask whether one may enter because the hallmark of Islaam must be used first to express the Islaamic bond between the persons involved.

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[1] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.423) and Mazhari (Vol.6 Pg.487).

Shaking Hands

When meeting each other and greeting, a step further in expressing love and honour is to shake hands. This is done after verbally expressing the words of Salaam and serves as a completion to the act of greeting.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that the handshake is a completion of the Salaam.[1]

Shaking Children's Hands

Imaam Bukhaari رحمه الله has written a chapter on shaking hands with children in his book *Adabul Mufrid*. Here he quotes a narration in which Hadhrat Anas τ shook hands with several people, including a youth named Salama bin Dardan رحمه الله.

Hadhrat Jundub τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ never shook hands without first greeting with Salaam.

The above narrations tell us that shaking hands is done only after greeting with Salaam and it is therefore contrary to the Sunnah to shake hands without greeting with Salaam. It often happens that people in crowds shake hands without greeting with Salaam. This is against the Sunnah because it has never been reported that Rasulullaah ρ or the Sahabah ψ ever shook hands without greeting with Salaam.

[1] Tirmidhi (Vol.3 Pg.97).

Shaking Hands Cleanses the Heart

Hadhrat Ataa Khuraasaani رحمه الله reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Shake hands (when greeting with Salaam) because it removes malice and ill-feelings from the heart and give gifts to each other because it develops love and eliminates enmity."[1]

Rasulullaah ρ also said, "The most helpless person is he who cannot even make du'aa and the most miserly person is he who is too miserly to even greet with Salaam."[2]

Hadhrat Miqdaad bin Aswad τ narrates that when Rasulullaah ρ arrived at night, he would greet in a manner that a sleeping person would not be disturbed, yet a person who was awake could hear him."[3]

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Make Salaam a common practice amongst yourselves so that you may elevated."[4]

Hadhrat Abu Umaamah τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that the person closest to Allaah is the one who initiates the greeting with Salaam.[5] Another narration states that the person who initiates the Salaam is free of pride.[6]

The above narrations emphasise the importance of greeting with Salaam when meeting with each other. To further express love and happiness when greeting, we should shake hands as well because this was the practice

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[1] *Targheeb wat Tarheeb* (Vol.3 Pg.434).
[2] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.423).
[3] Tirmidhi (Vol.2 Pg.271).
[4] Tabraani, as quoted in *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* (Vol.8 Pg.65).
[5] Abu Dawood.
[6] Bayhaqi (Vol.6 Pg.733).

of Rasulullaah ρ and the Sahabah ψ. When Hadhrat Qataadah رحمه الله asked Hadhrat Anas τ whether greeting with Salaam was a common practice amongst the Sahabah ψ, he replied in the affirmative.[1]

[1] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.401).

Announcing One's Presence upon Entering the Home

The perfect Muslim is he who follows Rasulullaah ρ in every action. When entering the home, it is Sunnah to announce one's arrival so as not to surprise anyone. By entering the home suddenly, one often disturbs the family and this may also lead to unfounded suspicion.

Hadhrat Aamir رحمه الله who was the son of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ said that his father always sought permission to enter when he came home. One must therefore make one's approach known, even if it means speaking loudly when arriving. Imaam Ahmad رحمه الله says that it is Mustahab to either cough when arriving home or to make some noises with the feet so that those at home are aware of your arrival. His son Hadhrat Abdullaah رحمه الله says that whenever his father arrived home from the Masjid, he would either stamp his foot on the ground or clear his throat so that his family were informed of his arrival.

A narration of Bukhaari and Muslim state that one should not return at night when one has been away for a while.[1] The reason for this is that in one's absence, the wife may be unkempt. By arriving unannounced at night, one may then find her unattractive and this may then create dislike. The Shari'ah has therefore given this instruction because it always strives to engender sound relations and to eliminate enmity. There will however be no harm in returning at night if the wife has been informed in advance.

[1] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.339).

The Importance of Seeking Permission before Entering

The beginning of Surah Noor states the codes of punishment intended to eliminate immorality and licentiousness. Amongst the many injunctions stated are those pertaining to seeking permission before entering. It has been declared forbidden to enter or to peep inside a person's house without his permission. One of the reasons for this is that one's gaze does not fall on a woman whom he is not permitted to see.

Verse 27 of Surah Noor specifies various types of homes and therefore various manners of entering them. **Homes are generally of four types.** One type is that which is exclusively reserved for oneself and there is no possibility of anyone else entering. The second is that which is shared by others, even though they may be one's Mahram. There is therefore the possibility of others entering. The third is that home in which there is a possibility of a person living exclusively and of others living there with him. The fourth is the public place which is not the living quarters of any person, such as a Masjid, Madrassah, Khanqah, etc.

The law pertaining to the first place is obvious. The person living there may, of course, enter without permission. Because this is quite obvious, it has not been explicitly mentioned in the verse. As far as the other types of dwellings are concerned, Allaah mentions the rulings pertaining to them in the verses thereafter. Allaah says:

"O you who have Imaan, do not enter any home *(whether rented or owned by you)* **besides your own** *(where none but you live)* **until you have acquired permission** *(to enter from those inside)* **and** *(until you have)* **greeted the inhabitants** *(therefore, first greet with Salaam at the door and then ask permission to enter)*. **This is best for you to keep in mind** *(even though some*

people may think that it is below their dignity to do so. This discusses the second type of home).

If you do not find anyone there *(whether there really is no one or not)*, **then do not enter until you are permitted to enter** *(because you may not enter any person's property without their permission)*. *(However,)* **If you are told to return** *(not to enter)*, **then return** *(from where you came and do not force your way in or remain standing there)*. **This is purer for you** *(because you will not be disturbing others)*. **Allaah is Aware of what you do** *(and will take you to task for disturbing people)*. *(This discusses the third type of home. One should seek permission three times and return if no reply is received each time)*

There is no harm *(sin)* **if** *(without permission)* **you enter uninhabited houses that contain benefit for you** *(public places or other places that you are allowed to use)*. **Allaah knows what you make public and what you keep secret** *(you should therefore watch closely what you do because nothing is hidden from Him)*. *(This verse clarifies the ruling with regard to the fourth type of building)."*[1]

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[1] Surah Noor, verses 27-29.

Miscellaneous Injunctions

While the Qur'aan and the Sunnah of Rasulullaah ρ emphasise the importance of not entering a place without first acquiring leave to do so, it is regrettable that Muslims today are unaware of this. While people of other creeds have adopted these ways and thus improved their lives, Muslims are lagging far behind. **The instruction in the verse is binding and in the words of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ, failing to implement the instructions of a Qur'aanic verse is tantamount to rejecting it.**

The Wisdom behind Seeking Permission to Enter

Whether owned, rented or borrowed, Allaah has granted people their quarters to live in and the purpose of having such quarters is for one to relax and be comfortable. This is clear from the verses of the Qur'aan. This is however only attainable when a person has freedom within his home without the intrusion of anyone else. Invasion of one's privacy will annul this freedom and defeat the purpose of having a home for oneself. Islaam has therefore forbidden invasion of privacy, which conforms perfectly with the feelings of any clear thinking person.

Another wisdom is one that benefits the visitor himself. When a person seeks permission to see someone in a civil manner, the person being addressed will respect him and listen to what he has to say. If he has any need, the person will then be more willing to assist him, as opposed to a person who barges in without leave.

Yet another wisdom is to prevent licentious and immoral behaviour because entering a home without leave to do so will result in looking at non-Mahram women and make one susceptible to the guiles of Shaytaan. It is also for this reason that the Qur'aan states the instruction of seeking permission to enter along with the rules pertaining to the penal code for slander.

A fourth wisdom is to prevent people from discovering the secrets of others because it is obvious that when a person is doing something that he wishes to conceal from others, his purpose will be defeated by someone barging in.

Many injunctions have been stated in the above verses, which we shall examine first before going on to others. The verses address those who have Imaan and therefore applies to both men and women. We therefore find that even the females of the Sahabah ψ sought permission to enter. Hadhrat Ummu Iyaas رضي الله عنها says that they were four ladies who often visited Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها and always sought permission to enter before doing so.[1]

Ruling: It is Waajib (compulsory) for a person to seek permission to enter, regardless of whether a man is visiting a man or a woman is visiting a woman. It applies also between people who are Mahram to each other. Hadhrat Ataa bin Yasaar رحمه الله reports that a man once asked Rasulullaah ρ, "Should I seek permission even to enter a room where my mother is?" "Certainly," Rasulullaah ρ replied. "But I live with her in the same house," the man explained. "You should still seek permission," Rasulullaah ρ repeated. "But I have to see to her needs (and therefore need to see her often)," the man added. Rasulullaah ρ then said, "You must still seek permission. Do you wish to see her naked?" "Not at all,"

[1] Ibn Katheer, quoting from Ibn Abi Haatim.

the man replied. "Then ensure that you seek permission first," Rasulullaah ρ emphasised.[1]

This narration proves that when the verse states, "**any home besides your own**", it refers to the fact that homes which you may enter without seeking permission are only those in which you live by yourself and are not sharing with people even as closely related as your parents and brothers or sisters.

Ruling: When a home is shared with one's wife, it is not Waajib (compulsory) to seek permission to enter, but nevertheless best to do so. Never arrive unannounced and at least clear one's throat or make sure that one's footsteps are heard so that those at home know that you have arrived. The wife of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ says, **"My husband would always clear his throat before entering so that we were aware of his arrival and so that he never found us in a condition that would displease him.[2]"**

To prove that seeking permission from one's wife is not Waajib (compulsory) when entering, Allaama Ibn Katheer رحمه الله quotes a narration in which Hadhrat Ibn Jurayj رحمه الله asked Hadhrat Ataa رحمه الله whether this is Waajib (compulsory). Hadhrat Ataa رحمه الله replied that it is not.

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[1] Maalik pg.725 and *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.401).
[2] Ibn Katheer, quoting from Ibn Jareer.

The Sunnah Manner of Seeking Permission

The above mentioned verse makes it clear that one may not enter a house without first doing two things. The Arabic word used in the verse for seeking permission is تستأنس , which literally means 'to seek friendship'. The word is used to indicate that seeking permission is necessary to put the person at ease and to make him feel comfortable and not threatened. This is the one act enjoined.

The other act is to greet with Salaam. According to Imaam Qurtubi رحمه الله and others, it refers to greeting with Salaam upon entering the house after permission has already been granted. This opinion is based on a Hadith from Hadhrat Abu Ayyoob Ansaari τ stating that when one sees a person at the house from afar, he should greet the person and then seek permission to enter. Otherwise, he should seek permission to enter and then greet with Salaam. This is however contrary to the majority of Ahadeeth stating that one must first greet with Salaam and then seek permission to enter. In fact, a narration of Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ states that when a person seeks permission to enter before greeting with Salaam, he should be refused entry.[1]

A narration in Abu Dawood states that when a person from the Banu Aamir tribe asked if he could enter, Rasulullaah ρ sent his servant to inform the man that he should say, "As Salaamu Alaykum. May I enter?" However, before the servant could reach him, he had heard what Rasulullaah ρ instructed and therefore said, "As Salaamu Alaykum. May I enter?" Rasulullaah ρ then permitted him to enter.

Another narration in Bayhaqi's *Shu'abul Imaan* from Hadhrat Jaabir τ states that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Do not

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[1] Bukhaari in his *Adabul Mufrid*, as quoted in *Ruhul Ma'aani*.

permit entry to the person who does not first greet with Salaam."[1]

Together with emphasising that Salaam be made first, Rasulullaah ρ also mentioned in the Hadith that a person should use civil and respectable words when requesting permission to enter. The proper manner of entering therefore is to first greet with Salaam, to then seek permission to enter and to finally greet again after entering as one would normally do.

Ruling: Apart from the above manner mentioned, it is best to also include one's name in the request to enter. Whenever Hadhrat Umar τ visited Rasulullaah ρ, he would say, "As Salaamu Alaa Rasulillaah ρ. As Salaamu Alaykum. May Umar come in?"[2]

A narration of Muslim states that when Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ came to Hadhrat Umar τ, he said, "As Salaamu Alaykum! This is Abu Moosa. As Salaamu Alaykum! This is the Ash'ari." He therefore clarified which Abu Moosa he was by stating that he was from the Ash'ari tribe. This he did so that Hadhrat Umar τ would know exactly who was at the door before granting permission.

Hadhrat Ali bin Aasim Waasiti reports that he once went to visit Hadhrat Mughiera bin Shu'ba τ in Basrah. When he arrived at the door and knocked, Hadhrat Mughiera τ asked who it was. "It is me," Hadhrat Ali replied. To this, Hadhrat Mughiera τ remarked, "I do not know anyone whose name is Me." He then came out and narrated that when Hadhrat Jaabir τ once knocked the door and Rasulullaah ρ asked who is was, he said, "Me." To this Rasulullaah ρ said, "Me? Me?"

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[1] *Tafseer Mazhari* (Vol.6 Pg.487).
[2] Ibn Katheer.

<u>Ruling:</u> A trend nowadays that even many learned people employ is to remain silent when asked who is at the door. This puts the person in the house in doubt and defeats the purpose of seeking permission.

<u>Ruling:</u> The narrations mentioned teach us that knocking is permissible on condition that one's name is given.

<u>Ruling:</u> When knocking, do not knock so harshly that the person inside gets a shock, but loud enough to be heard. It was the practice of the Sahabah ψ to knock with their fingernails when knocking at Rasulullaah ρ's door.

The person who understands that the purpose of seeking permission before entering will know that since the purpose is to instil trust in the opposite party and establish friendship, he will naturally take heed of all the above-mentioned requirements.

Note

While most people nowadays care little about seeking permission to enter and are thus guilty of forsaking a Waajib (compulsory) act. As for those who do seek permission to enter, they are usually unaware of the Sunnah method of doing so. The difficulty of course is that the person inside usually does not hear the Salaam and the request to enter. The most important factor to bear in mind is that one may not enter without permission to do so. The manner of gaining this permission does however differ from time to time and from place to place.

The narrations speaking about knocking doors indicate that ringing a bell also fulfils the compulsion of seeking permission to enter as long as one makes it clear who is standing at the door. Although the trend of using calling or visiting cards had been initiated by the Europeans, it is an extremely effective method of introducing oneself so that

the person to be met knows exactly who the visitor is without having to get up. There is therefore no harm in employing this method.

Ruling: When a person is refused permission to enter, he should not feel bad about it because there are times when a person cannot meet with others for good reason. It is this that the verse refers to when it says: "**If you are told to return** *(not to enter)*, **then return**". A pious person once said, "All my life have I waited for someone to refuse me permission to enter so that I may attain the reward for it, but I never attained the opportunity."

Ruling: The Shari'ah of Islaam always adopts the most balanced ways to maintain good relations between people. Therefore, even if not causing undue difficulty to people, both parties in the above have been considered. On the one hand, the visitor is encouraged to leave when asked to do so while on the other hand, the Ahadeeth make it clear to people that their visitors have a right over them. This right includes either calling him in or meeting him outside. Permission to enter may be refused only under exceptional circumstances.

Ruling: When one receives no reply upon the first attempt to seek permission, he should try a second time and then a third time. If no reply is received even after the third attempt, he should leave. By making three attempts, it is almost certain that the person had heard and failure to reply will mean either that the person is unable to reply (because he may be performing salaah, in the toilet, bathing, etc.) or he may not see it appropriate to meet one. In every event, it will be foolish to remain standing there because this will be a great inconvenience and the very purpose of seeking permission to enter is to avoid causing inconvenience.

Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "When any of you receives no response after thrice seeking permission to enter, he should leave."[1]

Hadhrat Anas τ and other Sahabah ψ narrate that when Rasulullaah ρ once requested permission to enter the home of Hadhrat Sa'd bin Ubaadah τ, Rasulullaah ρ greeted with the words: "اَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ ". Although Hadhrat Sa'd τ replied by saying, " وَ عَلَيْكَ السَّلامُ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللهِ ", he did so in a voice that was not audible to Rasulullaah ρ. Rasulullaah ρ greeted three times and each time, Hadhrat Sa'd τ replied in a voice that was inaudible to Rasulullaah ρ. When Rasulullaah ρ turned to leave (thinking that no one was at home), Hadhrat Sa'd τ ran after him saying, "May my parents be sacrificed for you, O Rasulullaah ρ! Every greeting of yours fell on my ears and I had replied each time in a voice that you could not hear. I did that because I wanted to get more of your Salaams and blessings (because Salaam is a du'aa for peace and blessings)." He then invited Rasulullaah ρ to partake of some food, which Rasulullaah ρ did.

This act of Hadhrat Sa'd τ was because of his great love for Rasulullaah ρ and that he knew he would be blessed more each time Rasulullaah ρ greeted him with Salaam. The lesson of the narration is that one ought to leave after not receiving a reply upon the third attempt.

Ruling: The instruction not to remain at the door applies when the person will be inconvenienced by it. However, if a person sits at the door of an Aalim or a pious person without seeking permission to enter so that he may be met when the Aalim or saint has the time to meet him, there will be no harm. This is, in fact, perfectly in line with the demands of respect because even the Qur'aan instructs people to wait for Rasulullaah ρ to leave the

[1] Bukhaari (Vol.2 Pg.923).

house before asking to meet him. The relevant verse of the Qur'aan is: "**If** (instead of shouting for you, O Rasulullaah ρ) **they had exercised patience until you came out to** (meet) **them, it would have been best for them."**[1]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ says that he sometimes waited all afternoon at the door of some Ansaari Sahabah ψ to verify a Hadith from them, knowing that they would certainly permit him entry if he asked. He however regarded it to be disrespectful to disturb their siesta.

"There is no harm *(sin)* **if** *(without permission)* **you enter uninhabited houses that contain benefit for you** *(public places or other places that you are allowed to use)***."**

The literal meaning of the word "متاع" (translated as 'benefit') is 'something of use' and therefore anything of benefit is referred to as such. The word in this verse therefore refers to a place that one is allowed to use. It is reported that when the verse was revealed preventing people from entering places without permission, Hadhrat Abu Bakr τ asked Rasulullaah ρ about the many traveller inns that lay on the route to Shaam. They were there for traders to use as they travelled because there was no other shelter available. It was then that the above verse was revealed.[2] This tells us that the verse refers to places that are not specifically designed for sole occupation by any people or tribe, but for the use of the general public. Examples of such places are such traveller's inns, Masaajid, Khanqas, Madrassahs, hospitals, post offices, railways stations, airports, etc.

<u>Ruling:</u> When there are restrictions imposed on access to certain public places, it will be Waajib (compulsory) to abide by these restrictions. For example, when access to a railway platform is restricted only to people holding a ticket, it will not be permissible to be there without a

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[1] Surah Hujuraat, verse 5.
[2] Mazhari, as quoted in Ibn Abi Haatim.

ticket. Similarly, it will also not be permissible to enter those parts of an airport where access is restricted.
Ruling: Rooms within Masaajid, Khanqas, Madrassahs, hospitals, post offices, railways stations and airports that are reserved for administrators and other people will not fall into the category of public places. Similarly, hospital wards will also not be included in this category out of visiting hours. It will therefore not be permissible to enter these places without permission.

Once it has been established that the purpose of seeking permission is to avoid causing inconvenience to people and to foster healthy social relations, there are several other rulings that will follow the same principle. They are as follows:

Ruling: It is not permissible to phone a person during hours when one knows that he would be asleep, performing salaah or engaged in any other necessity. This would inconvenience him and intrude on his privacy.

Ruling: When one needs to telephone someone often, one should enquire about the times most suitable to do and then stick to those times.

Ruling: When one needs to engage another in a lengthy telephonic conversation, one should first ask the person if he has the time at hand because he would have to leave everything else to speak.

Ruling: Leaving the telephone to ring without answering contradicts Islaamic behaviour and tantamount to not fulfilling the rights of a visitor by refusing him access to one. It must therefore not be done without good reason.

Ruling: When going to visit someone, it is not permissible to peep inside his house before permission is granted to enter. This will defeat the purpose of respecting a person's privacy because one is then likely to see something that the person of the house may not want one to be aware of. A narration of Hadhrat Sahl bin Sa'd τ reported by Bukhaari and Muslim strongly forbids this.

It was the noble practice of Rasulullaah ρ never to stand directly in front of the door when waiting for permission to enter, but to stand on either side. This

was to prevent the gaze from falling in the house when the door or curtain moved.[1]

Ruling: The instruction to seek permission to enter applies to normal situations. It will be waived at times when there is an emergency and one needs to enter to assist people trapped inside.[2]

Ruling: When a person has been sent for, it will be permissible for him to enter along with the messenger who called him without seeking permission because permission for the messenger to enter is permission for him as well. He will however be required to seek permission to enter if he arrives without the messenger. This has been mentioned in a Hadith of Abu Dawood[3].

It is necessary to seek permission to enter a person's bedroom even though the person may be one's Mahram to avoid the chance of seeing them in an unbecoming state. The wife of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ Hadhrat Zaynab رضي الله عنها says that whenever her husband arrived at the door, he would stop and clear his throat so that his presence may be noted.

Seeking Permission from One's Mother and Son

When a person asked Hadhrat Hudhayfah bin Yamaan τ whether he needed to seek permission to enter his mother's room, Hadhrat Hudhayfah τ replied, "Of course. Do you wish to see her in a state that would embarrass you?"

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[1] Mazhari.
[2] Mazhari.
[3] Vol.2 Pg.705.

Hadhrat Jaabir τ mentioned that a person should seek permission to enter even his son's and mother's rooms even though his mother be an old woman.
Hadhrat Naafi رحمه الله who was the slave of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ says that his master separated the beds of his children when they came of age and gave them a separate room. He would then seek permission to enter when he wished to visit his son's room.

Hadhrat Moosa bin Talha τ reports, "I was once walking behind my father as we were entering my mother's room. I was about to walk in right behind my father when he hit his hand so hard on my chest that I was forced to sit down. He then said, "Do you enter without permission?"

This narration makes it clear that it is necessary for the child to seek permission before entering the mother's room behind the father.

Seeking Permission from One's Sister

Hadhrat Ataa رحمه الله reports that he once asked Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ whether it was necessary to seek permission before entering his sister's room. When Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ replied that he should, Hadhrat Ataa رحمه الله repeated the question and added, "I have two sisters whom I have raised and whom I support. Do I need permission to see even them?" "Of course, "Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ confirmed, "Do you wish to see them in an unbecoming state?" Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ then recited the following verse of the Qur'aan:

"When your children come of age *(when they reach puberty and even just before this)***, they should seek permission** *(at all times to enter your room)* **just as those before them** *(others who had come of age)* **seek permission. In this**

manner Allaah explains His Aayaat to you. Allaah is All Knowing, The Wise."[1]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ then added, "It is necessary to seek permission when entering any person's presence."

Seeking Permission from One's Brother

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ said that it is necessary for a person to seek permission to enter the rooms of his father, mother, brother or sister."[2]

Hadhrat Jaabir τ also mentioned that it is necessary to seek permission to enter the room of one's mother even if she is old and weak. Similarly, he added, it is also necessary to seek permission to enter the rooms of one's brothers, sisters and father. Imaam Bukhaari رحمه الله has quoted several such narrations in his *Adabul Mufrid*.

Seeking Permission to Enter Three Times

One must seek permission three times to enter anyone's home. Hadhrat Ubayd bin Umayr رحمه الله reports that Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ once came to Hadhrat Umar τ and sought permission to enter. However, Hadhrat Umar τ was busy at the time and did not grant permission to enter. Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ therefore left.

When he had finished, Hadhrat Umar τ asked, "I heard the voice of Abdullaah bin Qais (Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ). Allow him in." When he was informed that Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ had left, Hadhrat Umar τ sent for him and asked him why he left. Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ replied that it was the teaching of Rasulullaah ρ that a

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[1] Surah Noor, verse 59.
[2] *Adabul Islaam* by Sheikh Abdul Fattaah Abu Ghuddah رحمه الله.

person should leave when permission to enter is not granted after three attempts.

Hadhrat Umar τ then asked Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ to bring him a witness to testify that Rasulullaah ρ had really taught this. Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari τ then went to a group of the Ansaar to ask them whether they had heard it from Rasulullaah ρ. They all replied that they had and sent with him the youngest of them all to testify before Hadhrat Umar τ. Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ was then sent to testify.[1]

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[1] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.422).

The Method of Knocking

When going to meet a friend, knock the door gently but loud enough for the people inside to hear. Never bang at the door like the police and gangsters do because this disturbs the people inside and it does no behove a Muslim to disturb another.

When a person came to Imaam Ahmad bin Hambal رحمه الله to ask a question, he knocked the door too harshly. Hadhrat Imaam Ahmad رحمه الله came to door and said, **"That knock was like the knocking of the police."** He then explained to the man that he should knock in a manner that does not trouble the people of the house because just as it is an act of Ibaadah to make a Muslim happy, it is a sin to cause him difficulty.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that amongst the deeds that Allaah loves is for one Muslim to make another Muslim happy. It is for this reason that saints say that making a Muslim's heart happy is really the Hajj Akbar (greater Hajj).

The Sahabah ψ knocked Rasulullaah ρ's door with their fingernails so that it should not be too loud.[1]

NOTE: One should knock softly only when the people of the house are able to hear the knock. If they are far from the door, one should knock in a manner that they will be able to hear.

The instruction to knock softly is given because Allaah loves softness and gentleness in people. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once

[1] Bukhaari.

asked them, "Should I inform you of the person upon whom the fire of Jahannam is forbidden? It is the one who is close to people and who is very soft and gentle towards them." Being close to people means that because of his gentle manner, people stay close to him and love to be with him.[1]

Rasulullaah ρ stated that when a person meets his Muslim brother in a manner that pleases Allaah (with a smiling and pleasant face), then Allaah will make such a person pleased on the Day of Qiyaamah.[2]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "The person who practises on the Shari'ah and whose character and personality is good will reach the status of the person who recites Qur'aan and performs salaah in abundance all night and fasts all day."[3] Rasulullaah ρ also said that the person deprived of kindness is deprived of all good.

One must also pause between each knock of the door and not continuously beat at the door. The pause should be long enough for a person making wudhu to complete the wudhu, for a person performing salaah to complete the salaah and for a person eating to complete the morsel he is busy with. Some Ulema have specified that the pause be as long as it would take a person to complete four Rakaahs salaah because a person could have just started salaah when one knocked.

When one has knocked thrice and is convinced that someone would have come had they not been engrossed in something, one should leave because this is the instruction of Rasulullaah ρ.[4]

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[1] *Ma'aariful Hadith*.
[2] Tabraani and *Majma'uz Zawaa'id*.
[3] Ahmad.
[4] Bukhaari (Vol.2 Pg.923) and Muslim.

Where to stand when Knocking the Door

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ never stood directly in front of the door when waiting for permission to enter, but rather stood on either side.[1]

The Ahadeeth have also sternly forbidden peeping through any holes in the door (i.e. the person knocking).

When asked who is at the door, one must clearly state who one is so that the person knows exactly who it is. It is wrong not to state one's name with the belief that people recognise one's voice because many people have similar voices.

Hadhrat Hudhayl τ reports that when Hadhrat Sa'd τ came to Rasulullaah ρ's door, he stood directly in front of the door. Rasulullaah ρ instructed him to stand to the right or left so that his gaze does not fall into the house. Rasulullaah ρ then added that it is to prevent the gaze falling in, for that seeking permission had been enjoined in the first place.[2]

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that once the gaze falls into the house, there remains no benefit in seeking permission.[3]

Hadhrat Jaabir τ once knocked Rasulullaah ρ's door. when Rasulullaah ρ asked who is was, he said, "Me." To this Rasulullaah ρ remarked in disapproval, "Me? Me?" Therefore, whenever the Sahabah ψ asked permission to see Rasulullaah ρ, they gave their full names.

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[1] Abu Dawood.
[2] Abu Dawood.
[3] Abu Dawood.

Hadhrat Abu Dharr τ left home one night and found Rasulullaah ρ walking alone. As he started to walk behind, Rasulullaah ρ asked who he was. To this, he replied by saying, "It is Abu Dharr."[1]

Hadhrat Ummu Haani رضي الله عنها who was the sister of Hadhrat Ali τ and therefore a first cousin to Rasulullaah ρ says that she once went to see Rasulullaah ρ. Rasulullaah ρ was then taking a bath and his daughter Hadhrat Faatima رضي الله عنها was screening him with a sheet. When Rasulullaah ρ asked who she was, she replied, "I am Ummu Haani."[2]

It is therefore improper to just say "It is me" or to make any other ambiguous statement when asked who is at the door.

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[1] Bukhaari and Muslim.
[2] Bukhaari and Muslim.

Prohibition from Peeping into Someone's House

1. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "There will be no sin (no Qisaas) on you if you throw a stone at a person who peeps into your house even if it ruptures his eye."

2. Hadhrat Anas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ was performing salaah when a person peeped into the room. Rasulullaah ρ then took an arrow from his quiver and pointed it to the man. This then made him move away.[1]

The following is learnt from these Ahadeeth:

- One may not peep into another's house without permission.
- Never enter another person's house without permission but rather knock the door, stand aside and wait for a reply. If there is no response after three attempts, then leave.
- Guard your gazes after entering the house because while it is Haraam to look inside before receiving permission to enter, it is also improper to do so after entering. Hadhrat Thowbaan τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that looking inside a person's house is as forbidden as entering without permission. Other Ahadeeth[2] convey the same meaning and also state that doing do is a major sin.

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[1] Tabraani and Abu Dawood (Vol.2 Pg.703).
[2] Abu Dawood (Vol.2 Pg.703) and Bukhaari.

The Manner of Placing the Shoes

Ensure that the shoes are clean before entering anyone's house and at all times because cleanliness plays a vital role in Islaam. Islaamic etiquette also specifies that the shoes should be removed and kept tidily. They should not be scattered about. Rasulullaah ρ directed that one wears the right shoe first and remove the left shoe first.[1]

[1] Muslim (Vol.2 Pg.197).

Etiquette of the Host and the Guest

When inviting a person for meals, ensure that you first enquire about his tastes and whether he has specific dietary requirements due to any illness or otherwise. These should be arranged for. Seat him in a place of honour because Rasulullaah ρ instructed that the guest be honoured.[1] The host should then do everything possible to make the guest comfortable and happy so that he returns home happily and with love.

The guest should also be thoughtful and sit where the host specifies without any fuss. This is necessary because the host may have chosen the spot so that the guests gaze does not fall where it should not.

Relating the incident of when he accepted Islaam, the eminent Sahabi Hadhrat Adi bin Haatim Tai τ says that when he met Rasulullaah ρ, Rasulullaah ρ invited him in the room and gave him a cushion (filled with bark) to sit on. When Hadhrat Adi τ offered it back, Rasulullaah ρ insisted that he use it. Rasulullaah ρ then sat on the floor.[2]

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that when Hadhrat Salmaan τ once went to visit Hadhrat Umar τ, who was then reclining on a cushion. Hadhrat Umar τ gave the cushion to Hadhrat Salmaan τ to sit on and said, "O Salmaan! Do you know that when a host gives his guest a cushion to sit on, Allaah forgives his sins."[3]

Hadhrat Ibraheem bin Nasheet رحمه الله says, "When I once went to visit Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Haarith bin Jaz Zabeedi τ, he removed the cushion from beneath him and gave it to me saying, "The person who does not honour

[1] Bukhaari (Vol.1 Pg.373).
[2] *Al Bidaayah wan Nihaayah.*
[3] Tabraani (Vol.8 Pg.174).

his guest has no relation with Hadhrat Ahmad Rasulullaah ρ and Hadhrat Ibraheem υ."[1]

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ narrates that when Hadhrat Jareer bin Abdullaah τ once arrived at a gathering Rasulullaah ρ was addressing, he found nowhere to sit. Rasulullaah ρ then threw him a shawl saying, "Sit on this." Hadhrat Jareer τtook the shawl to his bosom and kissed it saying, "May Allaah honour you as you have honoured me, O Rasulullaah ρ." Rasulullaah ρ then addressed the Sahabah ψ saying, "Whenever a respectable man of a tribe comes to you, ensure that you honour him."[2]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ was once sitting together with Hadhrat Abu Bakr τ and Hadhrat Umar τ on the floor when Hadhrat Uyaynah bin Hisn τ arrived there. Rasulullaah ρ sent for an eiderdown and had it put down for him to sit on. Rasulullaah ρ then said, "Whenever a respectable man of a tribe comes to you, ensure that you honour him."[3]

Allaama Ibn Seereen رحمه الله was once sitting on the ground and reclining on a cushion when Hadhrat Khaarija bin Zaid رحمه الله arrived. As Hadhrat Khaarija رحمه الله was about to sit where Allaama Ibn Seereen رحمه الله sat, the Allaama remarked, "I cannot allow you to sit in my house in a place I do not approve of. You will have to sit where I specify because just as the Hadith states that the guest has no right to be the Imaam in the presence of the host, the guest may also not sit where the host sits. He may do so only with the permission of the host."[4]

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[1] Tabraani (Vol.4 Pg.146).
[2] Tabraani (Vol.8 Pg.16).
[3] Tabraani (Vol.8 Pg.16).
[4] Muslim.

We learn the following etiquette from the above narrations:

1. The guest should sit where the host specifies
2. He should lie down or sleep where the host specifies
3. He should not look too closely at the contents of the host’s house and control his gaze to look only where it is necessary. Looking too closely at the host’s possessions contradicts the etiquettes of Islaam and will reduce the respect the host has for the guest.

We must observe all the above etiquettes with an open heart to ensure that the love and respect between host and guests remains standing firmly and continues to increase. May Allaah protect us all. Aameen.

The Etiquette of Visiting People

Imaam Nawawi رحمه الله writes that it is Mustahab for every Muslim to visit the pious as well as his brothers, sisters, relatives, neighbours, friends and acquaintances. He should maintain sound relations with them, host them and honour each of them as they deserve to be honoured. This is a Mustahab act that is highly emphasised.

It is also most appropriate to visit people at times when they are happy to meet one. One must therefore:

1. Choose a suitable time to visit and spend only that much time that will not inconvenience the person. Never overstay one's visit.
2. Never visit at times when the person is eating or sleeping because this is an inconvenience.
3. Speak only what is relevant and keep it brief.
4. Remain silent when one is the youngest in the gathering and respond only when a response is asked for.

Etiquettes of Attending Gatherings

The following etiquettes must be borne in mind when attending a gathering:

1. Greet all those present with Salaam
2. If one intends shaking hands with them, start with the most important person present. If all the people are of equal status, start with the one who appears most pious. If one cannot tell who is the most pious or most learned, start with the eldest because they are often most distinguishable in a gathering. Rasulullaah ρ instructed that the elderly be given place in a gathering.[1]

Shaking hands with the first person one sees while ignoring the most distinguished person in the gathering will be looked at with derision by the others present.

As directed by Rasulullaah ρ[2], one must never sit in between two persons, but on their sides. Further more, when two people make way for another, he should try to occupy the least amount of space and not make himself comfortable at their expense.

Hadhrat Ibn Arabi رحمه الله says that two persons are most unjust. The one is he who is given good counsel and then turns it into something bad. The other is he who is given a little space to sit in a gathering and who then occupies extra space. When sitting between two persons, do not listen to what they have to say to each other unless you have permission to do so or if it is of mutual interest. It is however wrong to overhear their secretive talks. In fact, Rasulullaah ρ has condemned it saying, "Molten lead will be poured into the ears of a person who heard the talks of

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[1] Bukhaari and Muslim.
[2] Muslim (Vol.2 Pg.217).

any group of people when they were not happy to have him hear it."[1]

It must also be borne in mind that when three persons are sitting together, it is wrong for two of them to whisper to themselves because this would create the suspicion in the third person's mind that they may be speaking about him. This will then lead to strained ties between them and eventually the breaking of ties, which is a major sin.

When someone asked Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ about two people whispering to each other when there are four of them in a gathering, he replied that there was no harm in that.

When two people are whispering something to each other, it is also wrong to interrupt them by sitting there and starting to talk to them without their permission. If it is necessary to interrupt them, their permission should be requested with civility and tact.

When asked a question, first think carefully about your response before delivering it and when someone is telling you something that you already know, first listen carefully to what he is saying. Never tell him immediately that you know what he is about to say because listening to him may reveal to you something that you do not know.

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[1] Bukhaari.

Respect for Elders

Hadhrat Ubaadah bin Saamit τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who does not show respect to our elders, does not show compassion to our youngsters and does not perceive the rights of the Aalim is not of our Ummah."[1]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who does not show compassion to our youngsters and does not perceive the rights of our elders is not of our Ummah."[2]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who does not show respect to our elders, does not show compassion to our youngsters and does not enjoin good and forbid evil is not of our Ummah."[3]

Hadhrat Abu Usaama τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ was sitting with some of the Sahabah ψ including Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها, Hadhrat Umar τ and Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah τ when someone brought a drink in a cup. Rasulullaah ρ handed it to Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah τ and told him to drink. Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah τ twice offered it back to Rasulullaah ρ, asking him to drink first but Rasulullaah ρ said, **"You drink because blessings are received through the elderly ones like yourself. The person who does not show respect to our elders and does not show compassion to our youngsters is not of our Ummah."**[4]

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[1] Ahmad, as quoted in *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* (Vol.1 Pg.338).
[2] *Makaarim* of Tabraani pg351 and Bayhaqi pg.458.
[3] Bayhaqi pg.458.
[4] *Majma'uz Zawaa'id*.

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "When a youngster honours an elderly person because of his age, Allaah will appoint someone to honour him in his old age."[1]

The Etiquette of Walking with Pious People: When you ever get the opportunity of walking with pious people, remember to walk on their right, but slightly behind them. Give them the opportunity to enter or exit a place first.

When it is time in your house for salaah to be performed, the Adhaan should be called out (if there is no Masjid in the area) and it is the eldest who should lead the salaah because Rasulullaah ρ has instructed that the eldest lead the salaah out of respect for their age.

Haafidh Ibn Rajab Hambali رحمه الله said that one should walk to the right of elderly people because this makes it easy for them to spit or to clean their nose to their left. This is because a narration states that when someone wanted to spit to the right, Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal τ stopped him saying, "Since I became a Muslim, I have never spat to the right." It is Sunnah to spit to the left.

When serving guests, it is also best to start with the eldest and then with those on the right of him. **Hadhrat Hudhayfah τ reports that whenever they were invited to eat with Rasulullaah ρ, they never started until Rasulullaah ρ did.**[2]

When meeting an elderly person, greet him with respect and give all the respect he deserves thereafter. Give him the opportunity to speak first and listen attentively to what he has to say. If you need to call for an elderly person, do so with respect and bearing his age in mind. All

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[1] *Makaarim* of Tabraani pg.368 and Bayhaqi pg.461.
[2] Muslim (Vol.2 Pg.171).

these must be kept in mind as they have been taught in the Ahadeeth.

When two brothers came to discuss something with Rasulullaah ρ and the younger one was about to speak first, the Nabi of Allaah ρ said, “Give your elder brother his right (let him speak first).”[1]

Rasulullaah ρ taught the youngsters to respect elders and elders to be kind to the youngsters. Hadhrat Maalik bin Huwayrith τ reports that they were a group of youngsters who once came to Rasulullaah ρ and stayed over in Madinah for a few days. Rasulullaah ρ was extremely kind and compassionate towards them and when he sensed that they were missing home, he called them and asked them which of their families they had left to come. When they explained the details to him, Rasulullaah ρ permitted them to return home to their families.

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[1] Bukhaari and Muslim.

Hosting Guests

Together with respect and honour in this world, the teachings Rasulullaah ρ brought also ensure that a person is rewarded in the Aakhirah. Amongst these teachings is the directive to host guests. Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who believes in Allaah and the Last Day ought to honour his guests." Rasulullaah ρ also mentioned that there is no good in the person who never hosts any guests. There are also several Ahadeeth stating that the right of a guest is to be entertained for three days and three nights. A person will of course be rewarded even more if he hosts guest for a longer period of time.

Guests must be honoured and given the best treatment regardless of whether they are Muslim or not. It is not enough just to welcome a guest and feed him the best of foods, but one should also show him happiness and a smiling face so that he may feel happy and at ease. Meet him with a smile, speak happily to him and never mention any hardship or poverty that you may be experiencing because he will then regard himself to be burden to you and will be unable to stay on comfortably. Furthermore, if he is an intelligent and generous person, he will give you some money or something else and instead of you being the host, you will become the guest.

When a group of Sahabah ψ came to Hadhrat Jaabir τ, he served them some bread and vinegar (because it was all he had) and said, "Eat well because I heard Rasulullaah ρ say that vinegar makes an excellent gravy. It is destructive for a person to regard what he has at home to be inappropriate for his guests and it is destructive for people to regard what the host serves them as inappropriate."

Another Hadith states that for a person to look down on what his host serves him is enough to classify him as a bad person. It is of course also wrong to serve common food to one's guest when one eats the best or to serve him something that one would not serve himself or one's family.

Allaah's Words about Hosting Guests

Allaah says: **"Has the news about Ibraheem υ's honoured guests reached you?"**

The Arabs have always been noted for their hospitality and serving guests has always been a source of pride for them. The most prominent of them was always the one who most entertained guests. They were honoured to break limits to serve their guests and regarded it to be the right of the guest to give him preference to their own families. It is for this reason that the poetry of the Period of Ignorance is replete with recounts of people's hospitality.

The Arabs received this trait as a legacy of their forefather Hadhrat Ibraheem υ and even the Qur'aan bears testimony to this honourable trait of his. Islaam has greatly encouraged hospitality to inspire people who are rather negligent in this regard.

The Instruction to Entertain Guests

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who believes in Allaah and the Last Day ought to honour his guests."[1]

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[1] Bukhaari and Muslim pg.879.

Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ repeated these words three times.[1]

Every religion and creed encourages entertaining guest, which plays an important role in Islaamic teachings as well. One must never allow miserliness to prevent him from entertaining guests. One need not be like many people who are perplexed when receiving guests because entertaining guests is a fundamental pillar in upholding an amicable social structure. It is for this reason that the Shari'ah has classified hospitality as an integral part of Imaan.

Hadhrat Uqba bin Aamir τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, **"There is no good in the person who is not hospitable".** This refers to a person who neglects his guests instead of being welcoming and warm towards them.

Treat People According to their Status

Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Treat people according to their status."[2]

Hadhrat Maymoon bin Abu Shu'ayb رحمه الله reports that when a person once came to Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها, she gave him some bread. When another person who was well dressed came later, she seated him down and gave him a meal. When someone enquired the reason for the discrepancy, she informed him that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Treat people according to their status."

Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal τ narrates from Rasulullaah ρ that whether it be in matters of good or bad, one should treat people according to their status.[1]

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[1] *Targheeb wat Tarheeb* (Pg.371).
[2] *Jaami'us Sagheer* (Vol.1 Pg.163), Bayhaqi, Bazzaar and Muslim.

The above and several other Ahadeeth make it clear that every person is not to be treated in the same way because each person's status is different. Respectable people in society, Ulema and leaders need to be treated differently from common people.

Allaah has also not made everything the same and does not treat everything in the same manner. Concerning sustenance, Allaah says, **"Allaah has given some more sustenance than others."**[2]

Therefore, treating everyone in the same manner not only contradicts good character, but common sense as well.

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[1] *Kanzul Ummaal* (Vol.3 Pg.109).
[2] Surah Nahl, verse 71.

The Rights Owed to the Elderly

Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Samurah bin Jundub τ says, "I was a young boy during the time of Rasulullaah ρ and would remember all the etiquettes that he taught. In this way, I acquired a great deal of knowledge. What I remember well is that Rasulullaah ρ never prevented me from talking unless there were elder people present.

The practice of Rasulullaah ρ was to respect elders and to place them ahead in all matters. Preference and regard should be given to them in a gathering when there is none more learned or pious present.

An elder is not just a person who is more advanced in age than oneself. An elder is really someone who is more learned, more pious or has a higher status than oneself and even one who has better qualities, such as being more hospitable or one who strives harder in Deen. Such people must be placed ahead of others. The Muhadditheen are unanimous about the fact that the host should start serving such people and then those on the right of such people. By doing this, one will be practicing on the following two Ahadeeth at the same time:

1. "The person who does not show respect to our elders, does not show compassion to our youngsters and one who does not perceive the rights of the Aalim is not of our Ummah."[1]
2. The Hadith stating that one should start with elders.

The rights owed to an Aalim is that one should refer to him in matters pertaining to one's Deeni affairs as well as one's worldly matters. They must also be assisted in propagating the Deen so that the Deen remains amongst

[1] Ahmad, as quoted in *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* (Vol.1 Pg.338).

people. It also entails tending to their worldly needs so that they can be free to see to the affairs of Deen. They must also be respected and obeyed and never criticised. By being suspicious of the Ulema and criticising them, Deen will soon vanish from the lives of people because they will have none to turn to in Deeni matters. We must always have a good opinion of them and should some doubt creep into the mind, we should remain silent and hand the affair over to Allaah to decide.

Starting from the Right

When all the people in a gathering are equal in age and virtue, the host should start from the right when serving[1] because this was the practice of Rasulullaah ρ.

1. However, if one of the persons is elder in age, start with him.
2. Start with the person who is more learned than the rest, wherever in the gathering he may be sitting. Thereafter, continue with those on his right and so forth.

A Bedouin was once sitting on Rasulullaah ρ's right and Hadhrat Abu Bakr τ on his left. When some milk mixed with water was brought, Rasulullaah ρ drank and then gave it to the Bedouin, saying, "First those on the right and then the others." There is therefore no harm in starting with those of lesser status when one has permission from the rightful person.

Another narration states that when some drink was brought to Rasulullaah ρ, there were elderly Sahabah ψ seated with him and the young Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ was on his right. Rasulullaah ρ asked Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ whether he would permit him to

[1] Imaam Ibn Rushd رحمه الله.

give the drink to the elders first (even though it was his right as the person on the right). Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ said, **“When it comes to receiving blessings from you, O Rasulullaah ρ, I would not give preference to anyone else over myself.” Rasulullaah ρ then handed the cup over to him in acknowledgement of the fact that it really is his right.**

Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash’ari τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that showing respect for one’s elders is part of one’s reverence for Allaah.[1] A similar narration is reported from Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ.

The Shari'ah has instructed showing respect to elders because they are people who have spent a great number of years in Allaah’s worship and obedience and although they may develop some degree of senility when very old, their understanding is generally more mature and developed.

All youngsters need to serve and respect the elders so that they will receive their du’aas and have people respect and serve them in their old age. Hadhrat Anas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, **“When a youngster honours an elderly person because of his age, Allaah will appoint someone to honour him in his old age.”**[2] A person serving and respecting the old will therefore be rewarded in this world before even reaching the Aakhirah.

The above applies to old people in general. However, when the old person happens to be one’s father, it will be Waajib (compulsory) to serve and respect him. It must be remembered that the du’aas as well as the curses of the old carry much weight in Allaah’s court. If only all Muslims would understand this!

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[1] Bayhaqi (Vol.7 Pg.459).
[2] *Makaarim* of Tabraani pg.368 and Bayhaqi pg.461.

Blessings Lie with the Elderly

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, **"Blessings lie with the elderly amongst you."**[1] Another narration states that virtue and good lie with the elderly.[2]

These and other Ahadeeth indicate that the elderly should be consulted in all matters to benefit from their wisdom and experience. Their presence is a source of good and blessings and they should therefore never be regarded as a cause of difficulty. Serve them and earn their du'aas.

The Instruction to Put the Elders Ahead

Hadhrat Jaabir τ reports that when a delegation from the Juhaynah tribe came to Rasulullaah ρ, a person who was younger in age started to speak. Rasulullaah ρ stopped him saying, "Where are your elders? (let them speak)."[3]

Hadhrat Raafi bin Suhayl τ narrates that Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Sahl τ and Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ were together in some orchards in Khaybar when they became separated and Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Sahl τ was murdered. When the respective parties came to Rasulullaah ρ to discuss the matter and to discuss the penal procedure, a Sahabi named Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan τ started the conversation. However, because he was the youngest of them all, Rasulullaah ρ requested that someone elder should rather speak.[4]

NOTE: The above narrations teach us that it must be the elders of a group who negotiate and who are placed ahead

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[1] Bayhaqi and *Makaarim* pg.354.
[2] Bazzaar, as quoted in *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* (Vol.8 Pg.18).
[3] Bayhaq (Vol.7 Pg.461).
[4] Bukhaari (Vol.1 Pg.907) and *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.306).

in such matters. In fact, Imaam Bukhaari رحمه الله has written a chapter on honouring the elders, stressing that they be placed ahead in all matters.

It is sad that today's Muslims have been affected by the western culture and fail to honour the elders, regarding themselves as most worthy of being placed ahead.

The Etiquette of Meeting

1. Meet people with a smiling face and show your happiness to meet the people. There lies great rewards in being the first to initiate the greeting.
2. Do not use words other than “As Salaamu Alaykum” as a greeting or du’aa because these words have been taught by Rasulullaah ρ. Shake hands and then ask the person how he is. The words of the Salaam are extremely comprehensive and include a person’s welfare and safety in both this world and the Aakhirah. When shaking hands, Rasulullaah ρ never pulled his hands away but waited until the other person did.
3. Wear clean and tidy clothing when going to meet someone but never go with extravagant clothes to inspire the person with awe.
4. Arrange a time to meet a person before going so that your visit will not be an inconvenience to him and others. Failing to do so may cause your status to fall in the eyes of the person.
5. Welcome your guests with a smile and warmth, seat him well and be humble before him.
6. When meeting someone for a reason, stick to the point and do not waste time by discussing unrelated and unimportant matters.
7. Greet with Salaam at the door and seek permission to enter. If no response comes after three attempts, **leave happily.**
8. Take along an appropriate gift when going to meet someone because giving gifts develops love.
9. When someone in need comes to meet you, do your best to fulfil his need. If he is requesting you to intercede on his behalf, accede to his request. If you are unable to assist, tell him so in a kind manner but do not instil empty hopes in him.

10. Place your request in a civil manner and be thankful if the person helps you. If he is unable to do so, greet cordially and leave with a smiling face.
11. Never have the wish for people to keep visiting you, but go and visit them as well. It is healthy to visit one another and to assist each other, but remember that the meetings of Mu'mineen should always be for a good purpose.
12. If you notice a fibre or strand of something on the person's face or beard, you may remove it gently. If someone does this to you, be thankful for the favour and say: "مَسَحَ اللهُ عَنْكَ مَا تَكْرَهُ" ("May Allaah also wipe away from you that which you dislike")
13. Bear a person's sleeping times in mind when visiting at night and never stay too late. If you are informed that the person is already asleep, leave happily without showing any disappointment.
14. When a few people go to meet someone, ensure that you do not capture all of the person's attention by doing all the talking and giving no quarter to any of the others.

The Etiquette of Talking

1. Always speak the truth and never waver from this even though it appears to be to one’s detriment.
2. Speak when necessary and always speak what is meaningful because futile speech does not behove a respectable person. Remember that one has to account to Allaah for everything one says. Allaah says: **“There are angels ready and waiting to record whatever you speak”.**
3. Always speak gently, while smiling and in a soft tone. Never speak too loudly or too softly so that the person being addressed is neither at a loss to hear or inconvenienced. The Qur'aan declares that the worst of all sounds is the braying of a donkey[1], which is harsh and loud.
4. Never taint your tongue by saying anything vulgar. Never also carry tales, backbite, mockingly imitate or complain about others. Never make false promises, never tease people, never boast and never speak without thinking. Never call people derogatory names and never take oaths unnecessarily.
5. Always be just in giving evidence even though it may be to one’s detriment or to the detriment of one’s family or friends. This is enjoined by the Qur'aan.
6. Speak what is gentle and pleasing to people and not what causes them difficulty and anxiety.
7. When a woman is forced to speak to a non-Mahram male, she should speak sternly and only what is necessary. She must never use an alluring tone that may entice the man.
8. When a foolish person speaks to one, greet him amicably and then leave. People who are always speaking nonsense are the worst people of the Ummah.

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[1] Surah Luqmaan.

9. Keep in mind the frame of mind of the person you are addressing to ensure that he can understand you. If need be, you should repeat what you have said to make yourself clear.
10. Always be brief and to the point when speaking because verbosity is not appreciated.
11. When explaining any matter of Deen, always do so in the simplest and most uncomplicated manner. Never deliver a Deeni lecture with the purpose of impressing people, to show off or to merely entertain people. Such behaviour blackens the heart.
12. Never speak in a manner that would diminish your status in society.
13. When two people are talking to each other, never interrupt by cutting off their talks. If it is necessary to interrupt, do so after taking their permission.
14. Speak slowly and with composure. Never speak too fast and never joke all the time because this diminishes your status in people’s eyes.
15. Think well before replying to a question because it is foolish to reply without prior thought. Also never give a reply when the question is posed to someone else.
16. Never interrupt what a person is saying by saying that you already know it because it is very possible that he will state something that you do not know or that his sincerity may have a special effect on you.
17. Always bear a person’s status, age and relationship with you in mind when addressing him. Never speak to a teacher, parent or elder in the manner that you would speak to your friends. Also Keep the status of children in mind when speaking to them and do so with love and compassion.
18. Never point to anyone when speaking so that doubts and suspicion develop in their hearts.
19. Listen more and speak less. Never disclose the secrets of others and remember that it is foolish to expect others to guard one’s secrets.

The Etiquette of Writing Letters

1. Begin a letter by writing "Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem" and if one wishes to be brief, write "Bismihi Ta'aala". Rasulullaah ρ stated that the letter that does not start with Bismillaah is incomplete and without blessings. One must refrain from writing 786 as a replacement for Bismillaah because there are great blessings in using the words that Allaah prescribes.
2. Write your address on every letter and never rely on the knowledge that the addressee has your address. He may well have lost it.
3. Write the address clearly on the right side of the page and ensure that it is correct.
4. Ensure that you also write the date directly beneath the address or on the left side of the page.
5. Thereafter, address the letter to the addressee using appropriate terms of respect. Be brief and simple in the terms used and avoid using terms that seem too bombastic and pretentious. Then write the words of Salaam and greetings.
6. When writing to a non-Muslim, do not write the words of Salaam, but other appropriate words of greeting.
7. State the purpose of your letter after the greeting and then conclude with your name and an appropriate ending, such as "Request for your du'aas", etc.
8. Write legibly and neatly so that the content may be easily read and understood without difficulty.
9. Use simple and clear language when writing.
10. Make the letter brief but also comprehensive without being vague or ambiguous.
11. Keep the status of the addressee in mind from beginning to end.
12. Leave a space between paragraphs.
13. Always write what is meaningful in letters and write nothing that is nonsence.

14. Never write a letter in anger and always adopt a gentle attitude.
15. Never write confidential information in a letter.
16. Always use full stops at the end of sentences.
17. Never read another person’s letter without permission because this is treachery. The head of the household does however have the right to read and amend the letters of his subordinates, especially the correspondence of the girls of the house.
18. Always write to friends and family to enquire about their well being.
19. Ensure that you write to those friends and family who are ill or who have been afflicted by some calamity.
20. Write to friends and family to congratulate them on occasions of joy.
21. Always use blue or black pen when writing letters. Never use a pencil or a red pen.
22. Always deliver the letter to the post office in good time so that it is never delayed.
23. When requesting a reply from people who are not friends and family, send a stamped self-addressed envelope as well.
24. Do not only consider your likes and tastes when writing, but also consider those of the addressee. Do not only enquire about and inform about the welfare of those close to oneself, but also of those close to the addressee. Ensure that you do not ask too much from the person because this will diminish your status in his eyes.

The Etiquette of Working

1. Work with enthusiasm and apply oneself to the job. Try to earn one's own sustenance without being a burden to others. When a man from the Ansaar once came to Rasulullaah ρ to ask for something, Rasulullaah ρ asked him what he had at home. He replied that all he had was a cup and a bedding which he sat on and used to cover himself.

   Rasulullaah ρ told him to bring both items. When he brought them, Rasulullaah ρ auctioned them both for two Dirhams. He then told the man to buy food for his family with one Dirham and to buy an axe with the other Dirham. Rasulullaah ρ himself fixed a handle to the axe and told the man to chop firewood and sell it in the marketplace. He was to report back to Rasulullaah ρ after ten days. When the Sahabi τ returned after ten days, he had collected ten Dirhams. Rasulullaah ρ was very happy and said to him, **"This that you have earned by your efforts is so much better than begging from people and having to appear on the Day of Qiyaamah with the scar of begging on your face."**

2. Work diligently so that you never have to depend on others. The Sahabah ψ once asked Rasulullaah ρ which type of earning was best. Rasulullaah ρ replied, "What one earns with his hands and every type of earning that does not entail lying and deceit." Hadhrat Abu Qilaabah رحمه الله used to say, "Be diligent in your trade in the marketplace and you will be able to be diligent in your Deen and independent of people."

3. Always be truthful in your trade and stay far away from taking false oaths. Rasulullaah ρ mentioned that on the Day of Qiyaamah, Allaah will neither speak to,

look at, or purify the person who took false oaths to sell his goods.[1] Rasulullaah ρ also cautioned against taking false oaths to sell goods, warning that although they sell goods in the short term, they will ultimately destroy the blessings in the business.[2]

4. Always be honest and never taint your earnings with Haraam by selling defective goods or by exploitation. Rasulullaah ρ mentioned that the honest and trustworthy trader will be raised with the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام, the Siddeeqeen and the martyrs on the Day of Qiyaamah."[3]

5. Ensure that you sell the best to your customers and never sell them anything that you are not happy with. If they ask your advice, give them the best advice.

6. Take your customers into your confidence so that they regard you as their well-wisher. They must be confident in the belief that you will not deceive them. Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who lives on Halaal income practises on my Sunnah, he will be destined for Jannah if he safeguards people from his evil." "O Rasulullaah ρ!" the Sahabah ψ remarked, "There are many such people during our time." Rasulullaah ρ then said, "There shall be such people after me as well."[4]

7. Be particular about time. Open the business on time and remain there with diligence all the time. Rasulullaah ρ directed that one starts work early in the morning because the work done in the morning is blessed and Allaah has blessed the mornings for this Ummah.

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[1] Muslim.
[2] Muslim.
[3] Tirmidhi.
[4] Tirmidhi.

8. Work hard and encourage your employees to do the same. Fulfil their rights and always treat them kindly. Never take them to task for every failing and abstain from suspicion. Rasulullaah ρ stated that Allaah shall never grant purity to a nation when the rights of the weak amongst them are not fulfilled.

9. Always be kind to one's customers and never be harsh with people asking for loans (or credit). Do not make them lose hope and never be harsh when demanding repayment. Rasulullaah ρ said, "Allaah is merciful to those who are gentle and display good character when doing business and claiming debts."[1] Rasulullaah ρ also said, "The person who wishes to be saved from sorrow and regret on the Day of Qiyaamah should defer payment for their debtors or write them off completely."[2]

10. Never conceal defects in any goods and never deceive your customers. Always disclose any defects to the customers. Rasulullaah ρ was once passing by a heap of grain for sale in the marketplace. When Rasulullaah ρ placed his hand inside the heap, he discovered that it was wet inside although the outside seemed dry. "What is the matter with this?" Rasulullaah ρ asked the trader. "O Rasulullaah ρ!" the man replied, "It was caught in the rain." To this, Rasulullaah ρ remarked, "Why did you then not place the wet grain on top for people to see? Whoever deceives has no relationship with me."

11. Rasulullaah ρ had strongly forbidden causing difficulty to people by stockpiling necessities with the intention of selling them at a higher price later. Rasulullaah ρ labeled such a person as a sinner. Rasulullaah ρ also said about such a person, "What a bad person is he

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[1] Bukhaari.
[2] Muslim.

that grieves when Allaah makes things cheap and rejoices when they become expensive."[1]

12. Give the customers their dues in full. Be meticulous in weighing and measuring because Rasulullaah ρ once addressed traders dealing in weight and measurement saying, "You have been entrusted with two such tasks because of which previous nations have been destroyed." Allaah says in the Qur'aan:

"Destruction be to the cheaters who, when they take measure from mankind *(when they are buying from others)***, demand** *(that their purchase be given to them)* **in full.** *(They ensure that the seller does not weigh or measure less than they are paying for.) (However,)* **If they measure or weigh for people** *(when they are the sellers)***, they reduce** *(the weight or measurement of the commodity so that the buyer gets less than he pays for)***. Do such people not consider that** *(after death)* **they will be raised unto an awful day** *(Qiyaamah);* **the day when all of mankind will stand before the Rabb of the universe** *(to account for their actions and words)***?"[2]**

13. Compensate for the shortcomings in your business by spending freely in Sadaqah because Rasulullaah ρ once addressed the traders saying, "There is always a great possibility of you speaking unnecessary things when selling and taking false oaths so do spend in Sadaqah from your wealth."[3]

14. Never forget the trade that will save one from punishment in the Aakhirah, the profits of which will never come to an end. Allaah says:

"O you who have Imaan! Should I not show you a trade *(something that requires a small capital outlay and promises tremendous profits)* **that will save you from a painful punishment** *(Jahannam)***?** *(The trade is that you)* **Believe in Allaah and His Rasool ρ and strive in Allaah's path** *(exert yourself for the propagation of Islaam)* **with your wealth** *(possessions)* **and lives. This is best for you** *(for your prosperity in both worlds)* **if you but knew."[4]**

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[1] *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh*.
[2] Surah Mutaffifeen, verses 1-6.
[3] Abu Dawood.
[4] Surah Saff, verses 10-11.

The Etiquettes of Kind Treatment Towards One's Parents

1. Treating one's parents well brings good fortune in both this world and the Aakhirah. After the rights owed to Allaah, the most important rights are those owed to one's parents. The importance can be gauged from the fact that Allaah has stated the rights of parents alongside His rights in the Qur'aan and has also stated gratitude to them along with gratitude to Him. Allaah says:

"Your Rabb has commanded that you worship only Him and that you treat your parents kindly. If any one of the two *(your parents)***, or both of them reaches old age with you,** *(especially)* **then do not even tell them "Oof!"** *(or anything else that may cause them hurt)* **and do not rebuke them** *(even though they may be at fault)***.** *(Always)* **Speak gently to them** *(Never raise your voice when speaking to them, speak with respect and never speak to them harshly)***. Lower for them the wings of humility** *(always be humble and soft-hearted towards them)* **out of compassion and say, "O my Rabb! Show mercy to them** *(my parents)* **as they had** *(been merciful towards me when they)* **raised me when I was young."** *(Just as parents are merciful towards their children when their children are little and depend on them, the children should also show mercy towards their parents when their parents grow old and depend on them.)* **Your Rabb knows best what is in your hearts** *(He knows your intentions when you care for you parents)***. If you are righteous** *(obedient to Allaah and your parents)* **then surely He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him** *(Allaah will forgive those who sincerely repent for their sins)***."**[1]

In this verse, Allaah has firstly enjoined that none but He be worshipped. This is the most fundamental factor of all the religions of all the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام. It was for this that Allaah sent all the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام and revealed all the divine scriptures. This is the greatest of all Allaah's commands.

The next command Allaah gives is that parents be treated well. While Allaah is the Creator of all things, He has made

[1] Surah Bani Israa'eel, verses 23-25.

parents the means by which people come to earth. Because of this and because of the great effort and sacrifices they make for their children, Allaah has enjoined that they be treated well.

Allaah says in Surah Baqarah: **"Worship Allaah only, be kind towards parents..."**[1]

Allaah also says: **"Worship Allaah** *(and do good solely for His pleasure)*, **ascribe none as partner to Him and show kindness to parents..."**[2]

Another verse states: **"Say, "Draw closer, I shall recite to you the things that your Rabb has forbidden for you.** *(These are)* **That you do not ascribe any partner to Him and that you be kind towards your parents."**[3]

The following advices with regard to parents are given in the aforementioned verse of Surah Bani Israa'eel. Amongst these is that when they grow old, the children should not even tell them "Oof!" or anything else that may cause them hurt to which undermines their status and authority. The word 'Oof' is just an example and every language has its own terms of the kind. Hadhrat Hasan رحمه الله states that had there been a word other than 'Oof' that showed even less hurt and disrespect, Allaah would have used it instead.[4]

Whether the parents are old or young, it is Waajib (compulsory) for the children to respect and obey them in all cases. This is proven from many verses of the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth. The verse however talks about doing so when they are old because it is usually during their old age that they become more difficult and even ill, because of which children will need to serve them and even wash them and their clothing. However, even during such trying times, it will not be permissible for the child to lose patience and make irrational statements and remarks.

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[1] Verse 83.
[2] Surah Nisaa, verse 36.
[3] Surah An'aam, verse 151.
[4] *Durrul Manthoor*.

Enduring all of this and keeping the parents happy will result in tremendous rewards and good fortune.
Hadhrat Mujaahid رحمه الله says, **"Just as your parents did not say 'Oof' when washing your filthy clothing as a child, you should also not say 'Oof' when you have to do theirs in their old age."**[1]

The verse then proceeds to caution against rebuking one's parents. Although rebuking them is worse than saying 'Oof', it is nevertheless stated separately to make it clear.

Included in the instruction to speak gently to them is to speak with respect, to say what is good and to use gentle tones when addressing them. Hadhrat Zuhayr bin Muhammad رحمه الله explains speaking gently as saying, "Labbaaik wa Sa'dayk" ("At your service and pleased to serve you") when they call for you. **Hadhrat Sa'eed bin Musayyib رحمه الله says that it refers to the manner in which a slave talks to his master.**[2]

Allaah says further: "**Lower for them the wings of humility out of compassion".** Explaining this part of the verse, Hadhrat Urwa رحمه الله says, "Their heart's desires should not at all be affected and compromised by you." Hadhrat Ataa bin Abi Rabaah رحمه الله says that it refers to not raising and dropping the hands when speaking to them. Hadhrat Zuhayr رحمه الله explains it to mean that one must not respond even when one's parents swear at one.[3]

The fourth advice given in the verse is that one should make du'aa for them saying:

رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

"O my Rabb! Show mercy to them *(my parents)* **as they had** *(been merciful towards me when they)* **raised me when I was young."**

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[1] *Durrul Manthoor*.
[2] *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.4 Pg.171).
[3] *Durrul Manthoor.*

When the child was young and helpless, it was the parents who saw to all his needs. Now after fifty or sixty years, the tables have turned and it is the turn of the child to serve the parents and to spend on them. The child should look at what his parents have done for him, serve them in the same manner and make the above du’aa for them.

A person once carried his mother on his back and made Tawaaf with her like this. when he then asked Rasulullaah ρ whether he had fulfilled her rights, Rasulullaah ρ remarked, “You have not repaid her for a single breath.”[1]

Imaam Bukhaari رحمه الله has reported that Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ lived in a house right next to that of his mother. Whenever he left his house, he knocked at his mother’s door and said, “As Salaamu Alayki wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuh, dear beloved mother.” “And to you too, dear beloved son,” she would reply. He would then say, “May Allaah have mercy on you just as you had mercy on me when you raised me as a young child.” To this, she would reply, “May Allaah have mercy on you just as you are good to me in my old age.”

When one errs in any way in fulfilling the rights of his parents, he must immediately seek their pardon and do something to make up for the error. Explaining the part of the verse that states, “**Your Rabb knows best what is in your hearts**” Hadhrat Sa’eed bin Jubayr رحمه الله says that when the child sincerely repents for any shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of his parents, Allaah knows his remorse and will forgive him.

NOTE: It is not permissible to make du’aa for the forgiveness of one’s Kaafir parents if they have died. However, if they are alive, one may make du’aa for them to be guided to Islaam.

[1] Ibn Katheer (Vol.3 Pg.35).

Allaah says in Surah Luqmaan:

We have given man *(emphatic)* **instructions concerning his parents** *(to treat them kindly and to make every effort to please them).* **His mother** *(most deserves his respect and service because she)* **carried him** *(in her womb)* **in** *(a condition that she suffered)* **weakness upon weakness and** *(after his birth she still had to suckle him because)* **his weaning is in two years.** *(The emphatic instruction to man concerning his parents was)* **"Express gratitude to Me** *(first)* **and to your parents** *(next). (Do not neglect this instruction because)* **Your return will be to Me** *(in the Aakhirah when you will be taken to task for your disobedience)." (While you should always obey your parents, you may not obey them when they command you to do anything that violates the Shari'ah. Therefore,)* **If they** *(your parents)* **force you to ascribe such partners to Me, about which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them but** *(this is no excuse to ill-treat them or to sever relations with them because you should still)* **cordially associate with them in this world. Follow the path of him who turns to Me. Thereafter,** *(after you have lived your life in this world,)* **your return will be to Me** *(after death)* **and I will inform you of what you used to do** *(when I shall reward the good and punish the evil)***."**[1]

A verse of Surah Ankaboot states:

"We *(emphatically)* **commanded man to treat his parents kindly.** *(However,)* **If they** *(your parents)* **force you to ascribe partners to Me about which you have no knowledge** *(concerning whom you have no proof that they deserve to be worshipped)***, then do not obey them** *(your parents)***. Your return** *(after death)* **shall be to Me, when I shall inform you of what you used to do** *(therefore, when anyone wants you to do something that displeases Me, do not obey them because you will ultimately have to answer to Me)***."**[2]

The verse of Surah Luqmaan states that man has been given strict instructions with regard to his parents and also goes on to give details of the suffering and hardship that his mother went through in bearing him. In all her weakness and illness, she still persevered until she underwent the most difficult stage of childbirth. A verse of Surah Ahqaaf states: "**His mother bore him with hardship** *(pain and discomfort)* **and delivered him with hardship**".

After delivering the child, the parents still had to see to his rearing. As the father earned for them, the mother stayed

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[1] Verses 14-15.
[2] Verse 8.

home to tend to the child and nurse him. They protected him from the heat and cold and spent sleepless nights when he fell ill. They spent thousands on treatment, food and clothing for him and tolerated the messes he made and the cleaning up they needed to do. Apart from all of this, there was much more that they had to do for him because of which he cannot help but to be grateful to them. While the most gratitude is due to Allaah for bringing a person into existence, one's parents underwent many hardships and played a tremendous role in the child's upbringing. It is because of this that Allaah declares: "**"Express gratitude to Me** *(first)* **and to your parents** *(next)*. Just as gratitude to Allaah is not only verbal but entails a lifetime of obedience to His commands, similarly, gratitude to one's parents also entails obedience to their commands, treating and speaking to them well and placing one's life and wealth at their service.

When someone asked Hadhrat Hasan τ how was he to treat his parents well, Hadhrat Hasan τ replied, "Spend your wealth on them and obey their commands unless they command you to sin."[1]

Although one's parents may have showered many favours on a person, they still cannot compare to the good and favours that Allaah has showered on a person. Therefore, if they even insist that he ascribe partners to Allaah, he may not obey them, as made clear by the verses of both Surah Luqmaan and Surah Ankaboot. One may also not obey them when they command one to carry out a sin such as to omit any of the Faraa'idh, to play music and to dance at weddings or to do any other act of Haraam. Rasulullaah ρ said, "The creation cannot be obeyed when it entails disobeying the Creator." Whether it be one's parents, spiritual mentor, teacher to any ruler, it will not be permissible to obey any of their commands if it conflicts with the Shari'ah.

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[1] *Durrul Manthoor*.

The verse of Surah Luqmaan then goes on to state: "**cordially associate with them in this world**". This tells us that even though one's parents are not guided and wish to make one a Kaafir like themselves, one must still not sever relations with them even though one will not be obeying them. One must continue serving them and being good to them because every person will be called to account for his beliefs in the Aakhirah.

Being good towards one's parents does not only apply to the situation where they are Muslim, but also when they are not. Hadhrat Asmaa bint Abu Bakr رضي الله عنها reports that during the period of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, her mother who was still a non-Muslim came to visit her in Madinah. When she asked Rasulullaah ρ whether she could assist her mother financially, Rasulullaah ρ told her that she must maintain her relations with her mother.[1]

Hadhrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaas τ reports that the verse "**If they** *(your parents)* **force you to ascribe such partners to Me, about which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them**" was revealed with reference to him. When he accepted Islaam, his mother took an oath never to eat or drink until he forsook Islaam so that he would forever blame himself if she died because of it. He however told her that he was not prepared to forsake Islaam even if she killed herself. She then spent an entire day and night without food and drink, because of which she became extremely weak. When she repeated this for a second and third day, he addressed her saying, **"Dear mother! I swear by Allaah that even if you had a hundred lives and you sacrificed all of them, I would still not leave Islaam. You may therefore eat or remain hungry." She then started to eat again.**[2]

Allaah says in Surah Ahqaaf:

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[1] Bukhaari and Muslim.
[2] Ibn Katheer (Vol.3 Pg.445).

"We enjoined *(commanded)* **man to treat his parents kindly. His mother bore him with hardship** *(pain and discomfort)* **and delivered him with hardship and his bearing and weaning are** *(completed)* **in** *(a maximum period of)* **thirty months.** *(In this manner was man carried and delivered to the world)* **Until the time arrives when he comes of strength** *(matures)* **and** *(thereafter when he)* **reaches the age of forty** *(when he reaches complete mental and spiritual maturity)* **he says, "O my Rabb! Grant me the ability to be grateful for the bounties that You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and** *(grant me the ability so)* **that I** *(am able to)* **carry out good deeds with which You are pleased. And** *(in addition to this)* **create sound capabilities in my progeny** *(so that they may also have the ability to be steadfast Muslims)*. **Verily I repent to You** *(for my sins)* **and am from among those who surrender to You." These are the people from whom We accept their good deeds, overlook their sins and who will be among the people of Jannah because of the true promise that they have been promised."[1]**

A fortunate person is he who manages to fulfil the rights of Allaah as well as those due to others. He will also be grateful to Allaah for all favours and all those that Allaah has granted to his parents because the favours Allaah grants them are often passed on to the children.

[1] Verses 15-16.

The Status of Being Good to One's Parents

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports, "I once asked Rasulullaah ρ what deed was most beloved to Allaah. 'To perform salaah on its time,' Rasulullaah ρ replied. When I asked what came next, he replied, 'Treating parents well.' When I asked what came next, he replied, 'Jihaad in the path of Allaah.' This was all he told me, but he would have surely told me more had I asked for more."[1]

This Hadith makes it apparent that being good to one's parents is even more beloved to Allaah than Jihaad in the path of Allaah.

The word used in the Ahadeeth for being good to one's parents is "بِر" (*Birr*) and the word for being disobedient to them is "عُقوق" (*Uqooq*). These words are also used for other relatives. Another two words is "صِلة الرَحِم" (*Silatur Rahim)* and "قطيعة الرحم" (*Qatee'atur Rahim*), referring to fostering good family ties and severing family ties respectively.

The Mother Deserves More

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that a man once asked Rasulullaah ρ, "Who is most deserving of my good company." "Your mother," Rasulullaah ρ replied. When he asked who next, Rasulullaah ρ again said, "Your mother." When he asked who was next after this, Rasulullaah ρ again said, "Your mother." When the man again asked

[1] Bukhaari (Vol.2 Pg.882), as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.58).

who was next, Rasulullaah ρ said, "Your father." Another narration states that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Your mother, then your mother, then your mother, then your father, then the one closest and then the one closest."[1]

This Hadith makes it clear that the person most deserving of kind treatment is one's mother because it was she who bore the most hardship and difficulty in rearing the child. This is also because she is unable to go out and earn a living as the father is able to do. Next in line for a person to spoil with his good treatment is the father and then all other relatives in order of their proximity in kinship.

The book *Fadhaa'ile Sadaqaat* states that it is from this Hadith that Ulema deduce that the mother's right over the child is 75% as opposed to the father's right of 25% because Rasulullaah ρ mentioned her thrice and then the father on the fourth occasion. This they say is because the mother underwent three additional difficulties for her children. These are the bearing, the birth and the feeding. The mother therefore deserves more attention and in the event where a person is unable to do good for both, he should give preference to the mother. However, the father needs to be respected and honoured more highly.

Hadhrat Muhammad bin Seereen رحمه الله reports that when the price of date palms during the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan τ rocketed to a thousand Dirhams, Hadhrat Usaama τ hollowed out a date palm to feed its sap to his mother. When people asked him why he did such a thing when the price of date palms was so high, he replied, **"My mother expressed the wish to eat the sap of a date palm and it has always been my habit to give my mother whatever she wants if I am able to do so."**[2]

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[1] Bukhaari (Vol.2 Pg.883) and Muslim, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.418).
[2] Ibn Sa'd (Vol.4 Pg.49).

Hadhrat Abu Ghassaan رحمه الله says, “I was walking with my father in a rocky area of Madinah when I met Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ. ‘Who is this?’ he asked. When I told him that it was my father, he said, “Never walk ahead of your father, but behind or beside him and do not allow anyone else to come between you two. You must also never walk on the roof of his house when there is no ledge because his heart will be uneasy, fearing that you will fall. Furthermore, when you see your father’s gaze on a bone with meat on it, do not eat it because he may want to eat it.”

The Ability to Recite the Kalimah upon the Intercession of the Mother

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that there was a person during the time of Rasulullaah ρ by the name of Alqama τ. He exerted himself greatly for the Deen and gave a lot of charity. It once happened that he fell seriously ill. His wife summoned Rasulullaah ρ via another woman.

Rasulullaah ρ sent Hadhrat Ali τ, Bilaal τ, Salmaan Faarsi τ and Ammaar τ to examine the situation. They found Hadhrat Alqama τ in the throes of death and, try as they may, they could not get him to recite the Kalimah. Hadhrat Bilaal τ reported the situation to Rasulullaah ρ.

Rasulullaah ρ asked whether the parents of Hadhrat Alqama τ were alive. Rasulullaah ρ was informed that his mother was alive, and that she was extremely old. Rasulullaah ρ sent Hadhrat Bilaal τto request her to come to him, otherwise he would go to her.

When the old lady received the message, she said, "May my soul be sacrificed for Rasulullaah ρ! I shall go to him." She then took the support of a stick and walked to meet Rasulullaah ρ. When she arrived in the presence of Rasulullaah ρ, she greeted with salaam and sat down.

Rasulullaah ρ replied to her greeting and told her, "Do reply truthfully to whatever I shall ask you. If you lie, I will be informed thereof by revelation. Tell me, what kind of a person is Alqama?" She replied, "He performs a lot of salaah, fasts often and his spending in charity cannot even be estimated."

Rasulullaah ρ then asked her, "How is the relationship between the two of you?" She replied, "I am angry with

him.” When Rasulullaah ρ asked her the reason for this, she said, “Because he gives preference to his wife over me. He listens to her more than he listens to me and accepts what she has to say.”

Rasulullaah ρ said, “The displeasure of his mother has prevented him from reciting the Kalimah.” Turning to Hadhrat Bilaal τ, Rasulullaah ρ said, “Bilaal! Gather some wood so that I may burn Alqama.” The old lady was startled and asked, “O Rasulullaah ρ! Are you going to burn my son, the apple of my eye? How can I tolerate this?”

Rasulullaah ρ told her, “Allaah’s punishment is more severe and eternal. If you wish that Allaah forgives your son then be pleased with him. By Allaah! His salaah, fasting, etc can never be of avail without your pleasure.” She immediately raised her hands and said, “O Rasulullaah ρ! I call yourself and all those present here to witness that I am pleased with Alqama!”

Rasulullaah ρ then sent Hadhrat Bilaal τ to see whether Alqama τ could recite the Kalimah. He said, “It is just possible that she has declared her pleasure with Alqama because of me, without being pleased with him from her heart.” As Hadhrat Bilaal τ entered the door, he heard Hadhrat Alqama τ loudly reciting, "Laa ilaaha IllAllaah." Hadhrat Bilaal τ told the people that the displeasure of Alqama’s mother had handicapped his tongue.

Hadhrat Alqama τ passed away the same day. Rasulullaah ρ performed the funeral (Janaazah) salaah and then told the people, “Listen, Oh gathering of Muhajireen and Ansaar! Allaah’s curse is on the person who disobeys and hurts his mother. The curse of the angels and all of mankind is also on him. Neither are his Faraaidh nor are his Nawaafil accepted till he repents to Allaah, makes up with his mother, and serves her so that she becomes

happy. Allaah's pleasure pivots on the pleasure of the mother, and His wrath pivots on her anger."[1]

The father of the child strives hard in the sun and cold all day to earn for the child and even when he returns at night, he will take the child from the mother, swing him on his arms and do all he can to pacify the child. He will even take the trouble to ensure that not mosquito or insect harm or irritate the child.

It is for all this and many more reasons that Allaah has enjoined on children to obey and respect their parents.

When a Sahabi τ requested permission from Rasulullaah ρ to participate in a Jihaad expedition, Rasulullaah ρ asked him whether his parents were alive. To this Rasulullaah ρ remarked, "You Jihaad is to serve them."

When a man from Yemen came to Rasulullaah ρ to seek permission to participate in Jihaad, Rasulullaah ρ asked him whether he had any family left in Yemen. When he informed Rasulullaah ρ that his parents were there, Rasulullaah ρ said, "Then seek their permission first. If they permit you, you may proceed in Jihaad, otherwise you should continue serving them."

[1] Ahmad and Tabraani.

A Great Reward

A father had three sons. When he fell ill in old age, the eldest son told the other two that they may share the inheritance amongst themselves and he will tend to the ailing father. The two happily agreed. He then cared for the father till the father passed away.

After the demise, he beheld someone in a dream telling him to go to a certain place, where he will find a gold coin. He asked the person whether there will be any blessings in the coin. When the person told him that there would not be any, he did not follow the instruction, and forsook the coin. The following night he again beheld the person telling him to get ten gold coins from a certain location. Upon inquiry, when the person again said that there will be no blessings in the coins, he paid no attention to the instruction.

Thereafter, he saw the person again, telling him that he should collect one coin from a certain place. This time the person said that the coin will be blessed. Consequently, he collected the coin, with which he bought a fish. As he was cutting the fish, he found two valuable gems in the fish's stomach. He sold these gems to the king of the time for a price of sixty thousand coins. He then beheld someone in a dream telling him, "This is on account of the service you rendered to your father."

Parents are the Gateways to Either Jannah or Jahannam

Hadhrat Abu Umaamah τ reports that a person once asked Rasulullaah ρ what rights a child owed to his parents. Rasulullaah ρ replied, "They are either your Jannah or your Jahannam."[1]

This Hadith teaches that caring for one's parents, ensuring that they are comfortable, spending one's wealth on them and obeying them will be a means of attaining Jannah whereas disobedience and failure to care for them will lead a person to Jahannam.

[1] Ibn Maajah Pg.260, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.421).

Allaah's Pleasure Lies in the Pleasure of One's Parents

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The pleasure of Allaah lies in the pleasure of the parents and the displeasure of Allaah lies in the displeasure of the parents."[1]

Because Allaah has commanded people to please their parents, pleasing them will please Allaah and vice versa. This of course applied only when the parents command their children to do what is lawful. If they instruct the child to do something unlawful, appeasing them will displease Allaah.

The Father is the Best Door to Jannah

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "The father is the best of the doors leading to Jannah, so you may either look after the door or destroy it."[2]

Looking at the Parents with Affection Is as Rewarding as Hajj

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "When an obedient child looks at his parents with affection, Allaah records for him the reward of an accepted Hajj each time he looks." "Even if he looks at them a hundred times a day?" someone asked. "Certainly,"

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[1] Haakim and Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Durrul Munthoor* (Vol.4 Pg.172).

[2] Ibn Abi Shaybah, Haakim and Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Durrul Manthoor.* Ibn Maajah (pg.260) has reported a similar narration.

Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Allaah is extremely great and pure (He can grant rewards far more excellent even and none can doubt His ability to give as much as He pleases)."

Durrul Manthoor quotes a narration in which Rasulullaah ρ said that looking with affection at one's parents will earn one the reward of setting a slave free. "O Rasulullaah ρ!" someone asked, "Even if he looks 360 times?" Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Allaah is too great for anyone to attribute any deficiency to Him."

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ said that looking at one's father is an act of Ibaadah, looking at the Kabah is an act of Ibaadah, looking at the Qur'aan is an act of Ibaadah and looking at one's brother whom one loves for the pleasure of Allaah is an act of Ibaadah.[1]

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Keep away from other people's women and they will keep away from your women, treat your parents well and your children will treat you well. When one's brother comes to him with an excuse (seeking pardon), he should accept it whether it be true or false because whoever does not do this will not arrive at my pond (on the Day of Qiyaamah to have water)."[2]

This Hadith highlights three important factors:

1. If a person remains chaste and does not lust after other women, Allaah will make it such that his women will remain chaste and other men will not lust after them. Furthermore, their women will not even look at other men.

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[1] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.4 Pg.173).
[2] Haakim (Vol.4 Pg.154).

2. If a person treats his parents well, his children will do the same for him because they would have learnt by his example. They will regard such behaviour as part of their lives and do the same. It is a case of "do unto others as you would want others to do unto you" and "as you sow, so shall you reap". When you respect and obey your parents, it will instil respect and obedience into your own children for you.

   Similarly, ill-treating and disobeying one's parents will result in the same treatment from one's children. There was a man who had tied his old father up like a bundle of wood and was on his way to throw him into a well to be rid of him. When they reached the edge of the well, the father said, "Please throw me in another well because it was in this well that I had thrown my father." The son then came to his senses, untied his father and treated him with respect thereafter because he realised that this would be the treatment he would then receive from his children.

3. The third factor enjoined by the Hadith is to forgive a person when he asks for forgiveness. In fact, if one was at fault, one should also ask the person for forgiveness. If anything was taken from the person, this must then be restored. Another Hadith says that the one who does not forgive someone begging for forgiveness will be guilty of a sin as terrible as collecting unjust taxes.

The Du'aas of a Father are Accepted

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Three persons du'aas are readily accepted without doubt; the du'aa of a father, the du'aa of a traveller and the du'aa of an oppressed person."[1]

Mulla Ali Qaari رحمه الله says that although it is not mentioned, when the du'aa of a father is accepted, the du'aa of a mother must definitely be accepted as well. It is therefore necessary for children to ensure that they do nothing to hurt the hearts of their parents because just as their du'aas are readily accepted, their curses are also accepted, even though they are less likely to curse because of their love. While their du'aas in one's favour will ensure good fortune and success in this world as well as in the Aakhirah, their curses will spell destruction in both worlds.

[1] Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood and Ibn Maajah, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.195).

Some Incidents About Respecting Parents

Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها reports that when someone arrived with an old man, Rasulullaah ρ asked him who he was. "He is my father," the man replied. To this, Rasulullaah ρ advised, "Never walk ahead of him, never sit before him, never call him by his name and never attract verbal abuse to him."[1]

Respect for one's father must be in the heart, verbal and shown by deed. By saying that one must not attract verbal abuse to one's father means that one should never verbally abuse someone else's father, thereby prompting them to abuse one's own father in retaliation. This is tantamount to verbally abusing one's own father. Details will follow in a Hadith still to follow, Inshaa Allaah.

Whatever directives Rasulullaah ρ gave for the father in the above Hadith applies to one's mother as well. Walking in front of one's father will, of course, be permissible when one needs to do so for some necessity such as leading one's old father, etc.

Treating one's Parents Well Increases one's Life and Sustenance

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The one who wishes that his life be extended and his sustenance be increased should treat his parents well and foster good family ties."[2]

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[1] *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.4 Pg.171).
[2] *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.5 Pg.264).

It is tragic that many young people lavish their wealth on their friends and children, yet they feel a pinch to spend even meagrely on their own parents. They fail to perceive that apart from depriving themselves of the tremendous rewards of the Aakhirah, they are even depriving themselves of rewards in this very world. Details will follow in a Hadith still to follow, Inshaa Allaah.

The Rewards of Striving to earn for One's Parents

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that when a thin man once passed by the Masjid, the Sahabah ψ commented, "If only this body was made thin in the path of Allaah!" to this, Rasulullaah ρ remarked, **"Perhaps he became like that striving to earn for his old parents, in which case he would still be in the path of Allaah. Perhaps he became like that striving to earn for his young children, in which case he would still be in the path of Allaah. Perhaps he became like that striving to earn for himself so as not to be dependent on others, in which case he would still be in the path of Allaah."**[1]

This Hadith makes it clear that a person striving to earn a Halaal livelihood for his parents and children is really striving in the path of Allaah.

[1] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.5 Pg.264).

Serving One's Parents is Better than Jihaad

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that when a person came to seek permission from Rasulullaah ρ to fight in Jihaad, Rasulullaah ρ asked whether his parents were alive. When he replied that they were, Rasulullaah ρ said, "Then your Jihaad is to serve them." Another narration states that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Then go back and treat them well."[1]

Hadhrat Talha τ reports that a man came to Rasulullaah ρ and said, "O Rasulullaah ρ! I wish to proceed in Jihaad and have come to consult with you about the matter." "Do you have a mother?" Rasulullaah ρ asked. When he replied that he did, Rasulullaah ρ instructed, "Then stay with her because Jannah is at her feet."[2]

The above Ahadeeth make it clear that when Jihaad is not Fardh (obligatory), it is better for one to serve one's parents. In fact, this will be necessary if there is none other to see to their needs.

Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ reports that when a man migrated from Yemen to Madinah, Rasulullaah ρ said to him, "You have now migrated from the land of Shirk. All that remains for you to do now is to wage Jihaad. Do you have any relatives in Yemen?" "I have my parents," the man submitted. "Have they granted you leave to come here?" Rasulullaah ρ enquired further. When he replied that they did not, Rasulullaah ρ said, "Then go back and secure their permission. You may participate in Jihaad only if they permit you, otherwise you should continue treating them well."[3]

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[1] Bukhaari and Muslim (Vol.2 Pg.313), as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.331).
[2] Ahmad, Nasa'ee and Bayhaqi.
[3] *Durrul Manhtoor* (Vol.4 Pg.178).

Advice to a Person who Left his Parents in Tears to make Hijrah

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ narrates that a man once came to pledge his allegiance to Rasulullaah ρ. However, because he had left his parents in tears when he left, Rasulullaah ρ said to him, **"Go back and make them laugh just as you had made them weep."**[1]

The Sahabi τ in the Hadith came with a sincere intention and to pledge allegiance to none other than Rasulullaah ρ. However, Rasulullaah ρ sent him back to make his parents happy because they had been deeply grieved by his separation from them. This was of course during the time when Hijrah was not Fardh (obligatory) and the Muslims were strong.

The Hadith tells us that making one's parents weep is an act of sin that has to be redressed and making them happy and smiling is an act of reward. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ stated that making one's parents cry is tantamount to disobeying them and is a major sin.[2]

Hadhrat Uwais Qarni رحمه الله lived in Yemen. Rasulullaah ρ gave him the title of *Khayrut Taabi'een* (the best of people to come after the Sahabah ψ) and told the Sahabah ψ to ask him to make du'aa for their forgiveness. Although he accepted Islaam during the time of Rasulullaah ρ, he was unable to meet Rasulullaah ρ because he had to tend to his mother. Although he could not be amongst the Sahabah ψ for this reason, Rasulullaah ρ did not condemn his action, but rather approved of it. The status of serving one's mother can be ascertained from this. A narration of Muslim states that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Uwais has a

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[1] *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.5 Pg.262).
[2] Bukhaari in his *Adabul Mufrid.*

mother whom he treats well. If he ever takes an oath, Allaah will definitely ensure that it is fulfilled."

The Virtue of Making one's Parents Happy

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, **"Lying on a bed between your parents, making them laugh and them making you laugh is better than fighting with your sword in Jihaad in the path of Allaah."**[1]

Making one's parents happy and maintaining a relationship of fun and laughter is an act of great reward and even better than Jihaad. What better way is there of earning rewards for free?

Serving One's Parents is Better than Nafl Hajj and Umrah

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that a man once came to Rasulullaah ρ and said, "I have the desire to fight in Jihaad but am unable to do so (possibly because of some handicap)." Rasulullaah ρ asked, "Are any of your parents still alive." "Yes, my mother," came the reply. Rasulullaah ρ then advised, "Then fear Allaah with regard to her (by serving her well) because if you do this, you will be one who has performed Hajj, Umrah and waged Jihaad. Fear Allaah (by responding obediently) whenever she calls for you and treat her well."[2]

One must always respond to the call of one's parents and do exactly as they instruct. If they happen to call when one is performing salaah, the instruction of the Shari'ah is

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[1] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.5 Pg.263).
[2] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Durrul Manthoor* (Vol.5 Pg.263).

that it is Waajib (compulsory) to terminate even Fardh salaah immediately and respond if the call is for an emergency (e.g. if they fell and need medical attention). If the situation is not an emergency, it will then not be correct to terminate the Fardh salaah. If the child is performing Sunnah or Nafl salaah and the parent calls, not knowing that the child is performing salaah, it will also be Waajib (compulsory) to terminate the salaah to respond. This will apply even if the call is not for any emergency. Failure to respond will be sinful. However, if the parent knows that the child is performing salaah, the salaah should not be unduly terminated.[1]

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[1] *Shaami*.

Disobeying the Parents

There are unfortunately many people who disobey their parents, hurt them, behave harshly towards them, rebuke them and raise their voices before them. Furthermore, when they sometimes do a good turn to their parents, they remind them of it and make it seem as if they best know how to fulfil the rights of their parents. Such people are most unfortunate and deprived. They make their parents wish that they never had children because of their despicable behaviour.

Apart from those who directly abuse their parents, there are those who verbally abuse other people's parents, thereby causing the children of those parents to abuse their parents. Such a person earns double the sin and it is about such a person that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Allaah's curse is upon the person who curses his parents." Therefore, the person who has Imaan should fear Allaah in this regard. Those who have parents must realise the great rights they owe to them and bear in mind that just as a drunkard cannot enter Jannah, one who disobeys his parents will also not enter Jannah.

Rasulullaah ρ once said to Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal τ, "Never ascribe partners to Allaah even if you are killed or burnt alive. You must also never disobey your parents even if they command you to part with your family and wealth."

The Sahabah ψ were gathered together on one occasion when Rasulullaah ρ addressed them saying, "O assembly of Muslims! Fear Allaah and foster good family ties because the rewards for fostering good family ties is received most quickly. Beware of rebellion (against the Muslim ruler) because the punishment for rebellion is meted out most swiftly. Beware also of disobeying your

parents because although the fragrance of Jannah can be smelt from a distance of a thousand years, it will never be smelt by the person who disobeys his parents, the person severs family ties, the old man who commits fornication and the person who out of pride allows his garments to fall beneath his ankles. Remember that pride befits only Allaah and only He has the right to be proud. Remember also that all lying is sinful except if you lie to benefit a Muslim (to mend relations between Muslims) or to defend the Deen. Amongst the signs of Qiyaamah are that a person will disobey his mother to obey his wife and treat his friend well while ill-treating his father whereas being good to parents and making them happy is something that every person wants for himself (when he is a parent)."

The person who disobeys and ill-treats his father today must bear in mind that he will also be a father one day and can expect the same treatment from his children. Rasulullaah ρ mentioned that although Allaah usually reserves the punishment for sins for the Aakhirah, this does not apply for the person who disobeys his parents because such people will be punished in this world as well.

Because it is common for people to love those who do good to them, it is therefore natural for people to have love for their parents. It is also the right of the parents that their children love and respect them. An Arab poet says (the meaning of which is):

"I have imprisoned myself in your love
Because the person captured through favours is truly imprisoned"

Every child first shows love for his mother. He calls for her if she has to disappear from sight for even a little while and he calls for her whenever he experiences any difficulty. He believes that all good comes from her and that he will be safe from anything as long as she is around.

The child then has love for his father. He clings to the father when he leaves the house and is ecstatic when he returns. He asks for the father when he is not there and eagerly awaits his return. He believes that his father will reward him if he is good and punish him if he makes him angry.

It is then regrettable that when this child grows up, he forgets the favours and love that his parents showered on him. When his children misbehave, he forgets that he did the same when he was a child. An Arab poet says (the meaning of which is):

"The right to respect that parents have over us
is second only to the right that Allaah has
They had brought us from non-existence and grown us up
and therefore deserve the highest degree of respect"

Respecting One's Parents

Respect for one's parents means that we must obey their commands when it does not break Allaah's command and in a like manner, we must refrain from that which they forbid us from. Do what pleases them and never contradict your father when he speaks. Be at their service whenever they call for you, whether it be day or night. Never befriend their enemies and never ignore their friends. Remember that whatever you own really belongs to them.

Allaah commands us to pray for our parents by saying:

رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

"O my Rabb! Show mercy to them *(my parents)* **as they had** *(been merciful towards me when they)* **raised me when I was young."**[1]

Hadhrat Nooh υ made du'aa saying*:* **"O my Rabb! Forgive me, my parents, whoever enters my home as a Mu'min and all the Mu'mineen and Mu'minaat."**[2]

Allaah says:

"Ibraheem υ sought forgiveness for his father only because of a promise that he *(Ibraheem υ)* **had made to him** *when he said to his father that he would seek forgiveness for him, hoping that this would encourage his father to accept Imaan)***.** *(However,)* **When it became clear to him** *(Ibraheem υ)* **that his father was Allaah's enemy** *(when his father died without Imaan)***, he absolved himself from him** *(from his obligation to seek forgiveness for his father)***. Indeed Ibraheem υ was extremely soft-hearted and tolerant."**[3]

A Hadith states that while all a person's deeds come to an end when he dies, there are three things that still earn

[1] Surah Bani Israa'eel, verse 24.
[2] Surah Nooh, verse 28.
[3] Surah taubah, verse 114.

rewards for him. These are *Sadaqah Jaariya*, knowledge that has benefited someone and a pious child who makes du'aa for the person.

Allaah has commanded parents to make du'aa for their children and has also commanded children to make du'aa for their parents. The one who does will never be deprived because Allaah has promised to accept such du'aas. Praising such people, Allaah says: "*(They are)* **Those who say, "O our Rabb! Grant us the coolness** *(comfort)* **of our eyes** *(grant us pleasure and satisfaction)* **from our spouses and children** *(so that they never become a source of regret or distress for us in either world when they follow Islaam properly)***, and make us leaders of the pious** *(make our progeny pious and make us pious enough to lead pious people)***."**[1]

Allaah also speaks highly of people who make du'aa saying: **"O our Rabb! Forgive us and our brothers who passed before us with Imaan. And do not place any impurity** *(ill-feelings)* **in our hearts against those who have Imaan. O our Rabb! Indeed You are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful."**[2]

Allaah also speaks of the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام who cared for their parents. Allaah says about Hadhrat Yahya υ: "**...and** *(We granted him the quality of)* **compassion** *(towards others)* **from Ourselves and purity** *(because of which he never committed any sins)***. He was abstinent indeed. He was kind to his parents and was neither rebellious** *(not arrogant towards his parents)* **nor disobedient** *(towards Allaah)***."**[3]

Allaah quotes Hadhrat Isa bin Maryam υ as saying: **"Allaah has blessed me wherever I may be** *(so that I may always be of benefit to people)* **and has commanded me to perform salaah and to pay zakaah** *(when I return to the world before Qiyaamah)* **as long as I remain alive. Allaah has also made me kind to my mother** *(because I have no father)* **and has not made me a tyrant and a wretched person."**[4]

It is best for the parent and child to make du'aa for each other in front of each other so that the child becomes more loyal and the parent becomes pleased. Some pious elders have prescribed the following du'aa: "O Allaah!

[1] Surah Furqaan, verse 74.
[2] Surah Hashar, verse 10.
[3] Surah Maryam, verses 13-14.
[4] Surah Maryam, verses 31-32.

Bless my children, do not let harm come to them and inspire them to obey You and always treat me well.” My father often made this du’aa in front of us so that we all heard.

Children Making Du'aa for their Parents

The Qur'aan and Ahadeeth teach us several du'aas that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام made for their children. We should also make them to turn Allaah's mercy towards our children and teach these du'aas to our children. An example of these is:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلاَةِ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاء * رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

"O my Rabb! Make me one who establishes salaah, and my progeny as well. O my Rabb! Accept my prayer. O our Rabb! Forgive me, my parents and the Mu'mineen on the day when reckoning shall commence *(the Day of Qiyaamah)***."**[1]

This du'aa secured forgiveness for a person as well as for his parents. We should encourage our children and grandchildren to recite this du'aa thrice after every salaah.

Another important du'aa is:

رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

"O my Rabb! Show mercy to them *(my parents)* **as they had** *(been merciful towards me when they)* **raised me when I was young."**[2]

In his Tafseer, Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafee رحمه الله has stated that serving and obeying one's parents is not restricted to any age group because it is Waajib (compulsory) for a child to treat his parents well no matter how old he may be. The Qur'aan has however emphasised this in their old age because it is then that parents need the help of their children and because of their waning minds, they are more difficult to serve and obey. It is then

[1] Surah Ibraheem, verse 40-41.
[2] Surah Bani Israa'eel, verse 24.

that children need to exercise more patience. It is for this reason that the Qur'aan reminds the child that there was a time when he was also helpless and dependent and needed the help of his parents.

Ill-Treating Parents is a Major Sin

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Amongst the major sins are ascribing partners to Allaah, ill-treating parents, murder and taking false oaths."[1]

Although the list of major sins is very long, the Hadith states the worst of them all. Second only to Shirk is disobedience to parents. The term *Uqooq* (translated as ill-treating) is vast and entails hurting the parents in every way, be it verbal or physical and even failure to spend on them when they are in need.

Because the most beloved deed to Allaah after salaah on its time is kind treatment of parents, it follows that ill-treating them is almost as bad as Shirk.

Disgrace be for the One who is Not Admitted into Jannah through his Parents

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Disgrace be for him! Disgrace be for him! Disgrace be for him!" "Disgrace for whom, O Rasulullaah ρ?" the Sahabah ψ asked. Rasulullaah ρ replied, "For the person in whose presence one or both parents reach old age and (by serving them) he still does not enter Jannah."[2]

It has already been mentioned that one's parents are the best gateways to Jannah. Therefore, ill-treating them will naturally be the gateway to Jahannam. Although people are polluted with sins throughout their lives, serving one's

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[1] Bukhaari, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.17).
[2] Muslim, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.418).

old parents is an excellent purge for all sins and a means to enter Jannah. However, when a person still does not manage to secure their du'aas at this stage and hurts their hearts, he will certainly deserve only Jahannam. In fact, Rasulullaah ρ thrice cursed such a person. May Allaah save us from being like them. Aameen.

Jannah For The Obedient And Jahannam For The Disobedient

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The person who starts the morning as an obedient child to his parents will have two doors of Jannah opened for him that morning and if he has only one parent, then one door. Similarly, the person who starts the morning as a disobedient child to his parents will have two doors of Jahannam opened for him that morning and if he has only one parent, then one door." Someone asked, "What if they are unjust towards him?" Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Even if they are unjust towards him. Even if they are unjust towards him. Even if they are unjust towards him."[1]

This Hadith clearly highlights the importance of obeying one's parents and the caution against not doing so. The last part of the Hadith does not grant parents the licence to be unjust to their children because they will have to suffer the consequences of their injustice. The child should look at fulfilling his duty towards his parents even if they do not fulfil theirs.

This is a great advice to maintain an amicable social structure. It teaches us to rather concentrate of fulfilling the rights of others rather than only demanding our own. This will give peace to all.

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[1] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.421).

Punishment for Ill Treating One's Parents

Hadhrat Abu Bakrah τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Allaah forgives whatever sin He desires other than ill-treatment of parents, the punishment for which He will afflict a person before his death."[1]

Another narration states that apart from the person who ill-treats his parents and the one who severs family ties, none more deserves punishment in this very world (apart from the punishment in the Aakhirah).

While people make many plans to avert calamities and disasters in this world, they fail to address the cause because of which these calamities strike.

One who Ill-Treats his Parents will not Enter Jannah

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Amr τ narration Rasulullaah ρ said, "The one who reminds others of his favours to them, the one who ill treats his parents and the habitual drinker will never enter Jannah."[2]

Reminding a person of favour you have done them will eliminate the rewards accrued for the deed. Allaah says, **"O you who have Imaan! Do not make your charity worthless** *(do not destroy the reward)* **by reminders of your generosity or by** *(causing)* **hurt** *(to the recipient)*…"[3] Some people are in the habit of reminding others of their favours to them and actually make the recipients feel that they should have never accepted any goodwill from them. Such reminders serve only to hurt the person.

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[1] Bayhaqi, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.421).
[2] Nasa'ee and Daarmi, as quoted in *Mishkaatul Masaabeeh* (Pg.420).
[3] Surah Baqarah, verse 264.

By saying that such people will not enter Jannah, the Hadith means that they will not be amongst those to enter Jannah initially because if they died with Imaan, they will have to be cleansed of these sins in Jahannam before entering Jannah.

People guilty of ill treating their parents need to repent and mend their ways because a previously quoted Hadith makes it clear that they will be punished in this world before the Aakhirah. The third person who will be barred from entering Jannah will be the habitual drunkard.

Because they had been the means for our existence and because of their untold sacrifices for us, we need to be ever grateful to our parents, as instructed by Allaah in the Qur'aan. Furthermore, we must never displease them and do our utmost to keep them happy, especially when they age. It is because of this that Allaah stresses: "**If any one of the two** *(your parents)*, **or both of them reaches old age with you,** *(especially)* **then do not even tell them "Oof!"** *(or anything else that may cause them hurt)* **and do not rebuke them** *(even though they may be at fault)*."[1]

Bear in mind that they are sensitive and frail in their old age and one therefore needs to be more understanding. Remember the Hadith in which Hadhrat Anas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "The one who wishes that his life be extended and his sustenance be increased should treat his parents well and foster good family ties."[2]

In his commentary of Bukhaari, Allaama Ayni رحمه الله reports a Hadith stating that a person will have fulfilled the rights of his parents if he recites the following du'aa and then conveys the rewards to his parents:

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[1] Surah Bani Israa'eel, verse 23.
[2] *Targheeb wat Tarheeb* (Vol.2 Pg.315).

﴿اَلْحَمْدُلِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبِّ الْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ. لِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبِّ الْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ. وَلَهُ الْعَظَمَةُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ. هُوَ الْمَلِكُ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبُّ الْاَرْضِ وَرَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَلَهُ النُّوْرُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ﴾

"All praise belongs to Allaah the Rabb of the universe, Rabb of the skies, earth and all the worlds. All honour in the heavens and earth belong to Him and He is the Mighty, the Wise. All praise belongs to Allaah the Rabb of the skies, earth and all the worlds. All majesty in the heavens and earth belong to Him and He is the Mighty, the Wise. He is the Master and Rabb of the skies, earth

and all the worlds. All light in the heavens and earth belong to Him and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Another commentary of Bukhaari[1] adds the following at the end of the du'aa:

﴿اَللّٰهُمَّ افْعَلْ بِيْ وَبِهِمَا عَاجِلاً وَّآجِلاً فِي الدِّيْنِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ مَا أَنْتَ لَهُ اَهْلٌ، وَلَاتَفْعَلْ بِيْ وَبِهِمَا عَاجِلاً وَّآجِلاً فِي الدِّيْنِ وَالدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ مَا نَحْنُ لَهُ اَهْلٌ يَّامَوْلَانَا.﴾

"O Allaah! Be it now or later, do grant us in this world and in the Aakhirah that which suits Your greatness and not that which we deserve, O our Protecting Friend."

[1] Irshaadus Saari pg.8.

Kind Treatment to Parents as a Means of Removing Difficulties

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that three people travelled on a journey in bygone times. When it began to rain, they sought refuge in a cave. As they waited for the rain to abate, a boulder fell in front of the cave's entrance, sealing off their exit. They decided amongst themselves that only truthfulness and sincerity will save them. They agreed that each of them should therefore pray to Allaah for help, mentioning a deed that they felt was done with sincerity.

The first person prayed to Allaah saying, "O Allaah! You know that I once employed a person, whom I promised to pay with a fixed amount of rice. However, he left the rice behind when he departed. I then planted the rice, after which it flourished till it made a reasonable sum. I used this sum to purchase a valuable bull. When the person arrived after a while to collect his wage, I presented the bull to him. When he protested that his wage was an amount of rice, I explained to him that the bull was a result of the rice. He then took the bull with him. O Allaah! If this deed was done solely for You, then move this boulder." As a result of this du'aa, Allaah moved the boulder a little.

The second person prayed thus, "O Allaah! You know well that I always used to bring goat's milk to my aged parents. I happened to be delayed one night and, waiting for me, my parents fell asleep without the milk. When I arrived, I did not deem it appropriate to wake them, but stood by their bed with the milk the entire night till they awoke. (He did this despite the fact that him and his children remained hungry). O Allaah! If this deed was

done solely for You, then move this boulder." As a result of this du'aa, Allaah moved the boulder a little more.

The third person prayed, "O Allaah. You know well that I was in love with my cousin and that she refused several of my advances. Eventually, when I enticed her with a hundred gold coins, she agreed. As I was about to complete the adulterous act, she exclaimed, 'Fear Allaah and do not break the seal illegally!' Hearing this, I immediately withdrew. O Allaah! If this deed was done solely for You, then move this boulder." As a result of this du'aa, Allaah moved the boulder, due to which they were able to escape."